France and Flanders

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FRANCE and FLANDERS

Four War Years
in
Poem and Story

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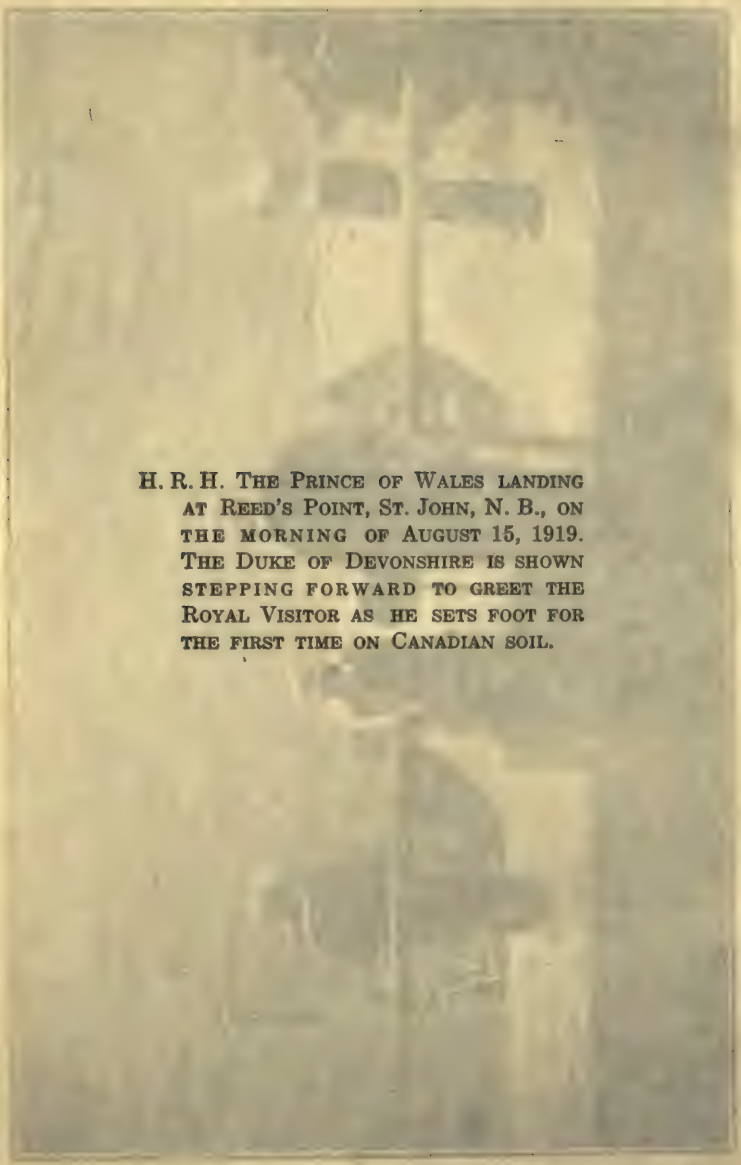

H. R. H. The Prince of Wales landing at Reed's Point, St. John, N. B., on the morning of August 15, 1919. The Duke of Devonshire is shown stepping forward to greet the Royal Visitor as he sets foot for the first time on Canadian soil.

FRANCE & FLANDERS

Four Years Experience
Told in Poem & Story
By Sapper W. Brindle

With Souvenir Photographs of
the Visit of H. R. H. The Prince of Wales
to St. John, New Brunswick
August 15, 1919

Published by S. K. SMITH, St. John, N. B., Canada

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SAPPER WALTER BRINDLE, THE AUTHOR

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SINCE reaching home it has been the oft expressed wish of my many friends that I would put into book form the varied experiences through which I have passed since my departure from the home city and during my stay in the land of War and Desolation.

As I sit in my study thinking the matter over, what a task it does seem to be sure, for one utterly unaccustomed to literary work, to attempt to place upon a few leaves of a book, the happenings of three and a half years spent on the greatest battlefield of the ages.

If the opinions of those who have from time to time read my letters is worth anything, I have the ability to tell a story in an interesting fashion, and as I have a story to tell, which I fully believe will repay the reader for the time he spends over it, I have decided to make the attempt, and if the result does not as a literary effort meet the expectations of the reader, I trust it will at least have served to pass pleasantly an otherwise idle moment, as the writing of these incidents and verses helped to make the time pass more pleasantly for me midst the mud and slush of Flanders and France.

W. B.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

IT having been my privilege to edit and place before the public during the time of his service overseas, absorbing letters written by Sapper W. Brindle containing proof in themselves that the writer possessed no little literary ability, together with a wonderful gift of description, I suggested to him on his return that these letters should be collected and published in book form. In the manuscript he submitted to me, however, he offered material for a much more pretentious volume than a mere reprint of letters already published in the daily press. By reference to his diary and by effort of memory he has compiled a running account of experiences in France and Flanders covering nearly four years, and has touched the high lights of the Canadian campaign.

His verse may not always follow the rule of metre, but requires no apologist. The war, it has been said, failed signally to produce any great poems, with one or two striking exceptions, and these which follow in the pages of this book, many of them written on the battlefield within range of the enemy's guns, have at least the virtue of being an attempt at portrayal of actual war scenes as witnessed by a grizzled veteran doing his duty from day to day, rather than mere poetic flights of fancy. We leave them to the reader's kind consideration. As for the

prose, it deals with the accomplishments of the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps and the writer has performed a valuable service in thus putting on record the achievements of a unit which trained in St. John and which took such an important part in the winning of the war from the broad standpoint of the Allied cause.

S. K. S.

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CHAP. 1

FIGHTING MYSELF

WHEN war was declared in August, 1914, I was just as enthusiastic as anyone could be, but I persuaded myself that I was too old at the age of 45 to think of enlisting for a struggle which I felt sure would not by any means take on the feature of a triumphant procession to Berlin.

Later on, when things began to assume a more serious aspect for us than we anticipated, I could still console myself with the thought that there were many young fellows to go before my turn came, and so I contributed as I was able, towards the comfort of those who had gone.

There came a time, however, a little later, when I could no longer satisfy myself that I had done all that was required of me, though I had given of my means, and assisted in the recruiting campaign. When Turkey and Bulgaria went against us, and decided to throw in their lot with Germany, I felt the time had come when every able bodied man would be called upon to do his bit, and so though I had added another year to my age in the meantime, I faced the doctor and feverishly awaited his verdict.

My wish was to go with the infantry in order to be near my three boys who had already joined the 64th and 115th, but I could not meet the eye test, and so was disappointed

in that. I offered myself for any other branch of the service where I could fit in, and in less than a month from that date, I was notified by telegram to present myself at Montreal in three days time, to be fitted out for overseas.

I had three weeks hard training there, and left for England on the 20th of November, 1915, and landed at Plymouth after an uneventful voyage, on the 20th. The first man to grip my hand as I went down the gang way was Capt., now Major Ronald McAvity who was transportation officer at that port at the time.

CHAP. 2

TRAINING AND WORK IN ENGLAND

WE pulled into Plymouth late at night, and had breakfast at five o'clock next morning, and leaving the boat at eight o'clock, we took the train for Longmoor Camp in Hampshire, which camp is situated in the heart of the New Forest where Robin Hood and his merry men were wont to hang out, and live on the best of the King's fat deer. We reached this place a little after twelve o'clock the same night, and as no supper had been provided for us, and we had partaken of nothing on the way but a sandwich handed to us when we left the boat, and a bun and a cup of coffee kindly served out to us at the station by the good ladies of Exeter, you may be sure we did full justice to our breakfast next morning.

The camp where we were to make our home for the next month belonged to the Royal Engineers, the Corps that gave us the late Lord Kitchener and many another famous general.

There was a military railway in the camp, run by the soldiers, and on the long stretches of level ground where the stately pines had been felled to make clearings for parade grounds, rifle ranges, etc., we along with thousands of others had our final training. Bramshot, Liphook, Liss, Borden, Aldershot, Witley, and many villages for

a distance of twenty miles around, were filled with soldiers, cavalry, infantry and artillery—whilst Farnham was the training centre for airmen, and many a youngster who first handled the joy sticks here, became a veritable terror to the Huns later on.

When we had been in England three weeks, my name appeared on a draft of twenty-five men to proceed to France on Christmas Day, and in consequence, I was given five days' leave, to visit the members of my family in the north, so had a trip of some 250 miles diagonally across country, and on return to camp was disappointed to find the draft had been cancelled indefinitely.

The last day of December, 1915, found us on our way to Newcastle-on-Tyne, the largest city in the north of England, where there is much shipbuilding and large iron industries are carried on. Our work here was to connect up the ammunition factories with the main lines of railway, put in sidings and yards for the quicker handling of the war stores turned out from this very busy centre.

Newcastle gave us a great reception, when we reached there, and most of our men were quickly adopted by some family for the week ends. The newspapers printed articles about the Canadian railway builders who had come amongst them for a little while, and when we got to work on our first job, many were the comments on the way we did our work, and the speed with which the work grew in the hands of our efficient officers and our thoroughly competent rank and file. The work done at Blaydon, Birtley and other places around will long be remembered, and is spoken of as examples of what can be done by the hardy Canadian railway man. The old commandment "Six days shalt thou labour" was duly carried out by us, and we were surely tired as each Saturday came.

It was not all work, however; we had our evenings and week ends, when we were invited to homes, churches, entertainments and concerts, and some of our men found their way to some of the beauty spots of nature, which are very plentiful around here, with members of the fair sex, and there told them the story that never grows old, and some of these soldiers now that the war is over, are showing the same ladies the beauties of our fair Canada. There were many things here to remind us of the grim business which brought us so far from home and kindred, the uniformed men on the streets, who were here in training, and others who had already been maimed in the first bitter onslaught of the great struggle. Then there were the shaded lights in the stores and on the street, and the air raid warning which several times sounded out while we were there, and on three occasions we heard the engines of the Zeppelins as they sailed over head in the dark. No bombs were dropped here, however, but other places on the coast were not so fortunate as the following lines will show:

The Air Raid

In a quiet little street,
In a quiet little town,
In a quiet English seaside place,
Played a happy band of children,
In a quiet little game,
And peace was on each happy little face.
Said a quiet little girl,
In a quiet little way,
To her quiet little chum by her side,
"I hear a strange noise way up in the sky,"
And the children ceased their play

To follow where she pointed,
With a quiet little finger on high.
Then a quiet little bomb
From a quiet aeroplane,
Fell down in a quiet little way,
And death came with it.
And it fell rushing down,
And landed with a crash,
On that quiet little town,
Where those quiet little girls were at play.
As each fond little mother
Rushed out to the door,
She gazed on destruction dire,
For she saw each little daughter
Lying quiet on the ground,
Some were dead, others maimed,
Some on fire.
And the fathers coming home,
In the quiet peaceful eve,
On that very quiet summer's day,
Heard the quiet sound of weeping
And the murmur of the dying,
From those quiet little forms
As they lay.

And this is Hunnish Kulture
And these scenes are oft repeated,
In these quiet little seaside towns,
Along the northern English coast,
Along the peaceful downs.

We stayed in Newcastle till the end of February and then were drafted to France to join our Corps which had been there since September.

CHAP. 3

OUR CORPS

IN the early stages of the war, it was found that the Belgian, French and English troops were sadly handicapped by the lack of railway facilities, as the existing lines were scarcely sufficient to meet the needs of industry in peace times, and when troops and supplies had to be rushed into position, the railway system then in existence proved utterly inadequate to meet the demands made upon it, one factor which hastened the retreat from Mons. Canada hastily put into the field her first contingent of infantry, and so quickly was the work done, that the attention of the British government was arrested by it, and those in authority came to the conclusion that the Dominion which had so readily responded to the Empire's need for fighting men, could be depended upon to raise in a similar way a corps of experienced railway men, who could give as good an account of themselves on the fields of France and Flanders.

A request for such a corps was cabled to Ottawa, made known to the C P R., and a warrant for the formation of the corps was granted in February, 1915, the unit being known as the Canadian Railway Construction Corps, under command of Lieut.-Col. C. W. P. Ramsay. The corps began to organize in March at St. John, and the body of 500 men sailed for overseas on June 15, 1915, two days after the 26th Battalion, and consisted of the

very best and most skillful men the Canadian railway system had to give. The foregoing statement is vouched for by the fact that 170 commissions were given to its members in the field, in addition to promotions to those who already held commissioned rank.

Lt.-Col. Ramsay became Brig.-General, Major Reid Lt.-Col., and O. C. of the corps; Major Hervey became O. C. of the 4th C. R. T.; Capt. Grant second in command of the 5th C. R. T., whilst many of the N. C. O.'s rose even to such heights as colonels of Canadian and Imperial troops.

It was to just such a corps as this that I was drafted in November, 1915, and with which I served until the armistice was signed, leaving then for home on the 22nd of December, 1918, and reaching home on the 24th of February, 1919.

The Bugles of Empire

The Bugles of Empire had sounded
The call had been given to advance,
And many brave men who responded,
Lay dead now in Flanders and France.

That brave little army of Britons
Hurled back by the merciless Hun,
Now lay in a fresh line of trenches,
Awaiting the help that should come.

A cry went out from the homeland
That surged like a wave to the shores
Of Canada, New Zealand, Australia,
Where men delved for rich, shining ores.

And down went the pick and the shovel,
Down went the rake and the hoe,
And big men who toiled on the farm lands
Got ready to answer, and go.

And many a man on his section,
And many a brave engineer,
As they laid track or drove the steel monster,
Oftimes felt their brave hearts filled with cheer.

For letters received from their mates there,
Way out in that war stricken land
Had told how, that shoulder to shoulder
Like heroes, their comrades now stand.

Some news just received a few days since,
Told how nobly the Canucks had stood
Till the last round of shot had been fired,
Then for Empire, gave life, limb and blood.

Reports also said how much different
The sad story might have been told,
Had there been just a few miles of railway
Over which shells and guns could be rolled.

In the roundhouse a keen driver waited
For the time to take over his train,
Said he, while the talk round him abated,
"Boys, this must never happen again."

"A big railway corps has been started,
Men from England, Scotland and Wales,
We'll drive the trains to the trenches,
Our trackmen shall lay down the rails."

A cheer shook the roof of the roundhouse,
The cheer wafted out o'er the track,
And down went the spike, maul and peevie,
As cheer after cheer answered back.

The corps was enrolled very quickly,
From B. C. to Newfoundland they came,
Handsome lads, brave and gayest of any,
To keep up the Empire's fame.

And they laid down the lines to the trenches,
From Dunkerque to old Kemmel hill,
By Poperinghe, Ypres, and Rhenninghelse
And many a car did they fill.

Big guns were sent up and erected,
And shells by the train load galore,
Trench mortars, and small ammunition,
The Canadians went forward once more.

They sprang in the breach at Givenchy,
They dashed to attack St. Eloi.
While the men who had given them the railway
Lay back, the great sight to enjoy.

The war is now ended, all over,
And the Boche if he wants it again,
Now knows he must take into reckoning,
The brave lads from over the main.

CHAP. 4

OFF TO FRANCE

THE last week in February, 1916, saw us all excited getting ready to leave the city of Newcastle, for the goal of every soldier's hopes — the blood-red fields of France.

A draft of fifty men of which I was one left the first week in March to join the corps which had been out there for some three months.

We had a great send-off from the people of Newcastle, which place we left at 5.30 in the afternoon by train, arriving at Folkestone next morning. About four o'clock in the afternoon, we crossed the channel on one of the many boats that were constantly rushing troops across to the theatre of war.

We made Boulogne about 6.30, and were put into barracks for the night. In the morning after breakfast we were marched about three miles up a big hill to get our goat skin coats and gas-masks, or P. H. helmets, as they were called at that time. Boulogne is a very pretty place, possessing quite a harbor, and doing a good business in the fishing industry.

Away to the left of the station, some two miles along, is a fine promenade and if you are fortunate enough to be there on a Sunday afternoon, you will see just what the French ladies can do in the way of dress, for that is certainly "some" parade. Some two miles farther still,

is the sweetest little bathing place, Wimereaux by name. It was one huge hospital during the war.

We left this place about noon on our way to the front, and brought up late at night in the famous horse shoe salient near Ypres. We found our corps, the C. O. R. C. C. (Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps), at work on a new line running right around the whole salient from Abeele to Kemmel Hill. Our camp was at Whippenhook, just outside Poperinghe, and the line ran through this place by way of Dickebusch, La Clyte and Rhenninghelse. This was a very unhealthy spot in early 1916, as there was constant shelling of our positions, and frequent use was made of cloud gas when ever the wind was favorable. Our draft was portioned off into the various companies, and it fell to my lot to remain with headquarters, being allotted to the quartermaster's department. Much of our work was done at night with shaded lights, as we were past the daylight limit with the line at this time. We had an armored engine for taking up the train of cars with supplies, and I would often go up with the night crew on their runs.

One night riding along in the cab with the driver, he showed me a spot, between Dickebusch and La Clyte where the previous night, he had picked up a number of wounded men who were making their way to the dressing station. The Huns had been making an attack, and had been repulsed again as they often were in that salient, by the stubborn resistance of our sturdy Canadian boys who seemed to fear neither shells nor gas, but I will tell you the story as it was told to me by the driver.

The Engineer's Story

'Twas in the horse shoe salient,
Which, as everybody knows,
Wasn't famous as a health resort,
By reason of our foes.

For death lurked round old Poperinghe,
And gas belched forth from Ypres (heaps),
And shells shrieked over Rhenninghelse
That gave us all the creeps.

It grew to be my duty,
As each night came along,
To climb into the engine cab
And listen to their song.

My run was out of Whippenhook,
Around to Kemmel Hill,
Through Dickebusch, and by La Clyte,
With rock to make a fill.

One night while running of the train,
I saw along the track
A little chap all bleeding, torn,
Creep out from the attack.

His left hand gone above the wrist,
His right foot blown away,
And tied up in a sand bag,
The bleeding stopped with clay.

I pulled back the old engine,
And jumped down in a trice,
I thought to take him into camp,
But judge of my surprise,

When with a smile he feebly said,
Don't waste your time on me,
Just run a mile along the track,
And many worse you'll see.

"If you've a fag, just light it, please,
And pass it on to me.
And I'll go on, and so must you,
The day is breaking, see!"

I parted with the little chap,
And found as he had said,
A bunch of fellows down the line,
With wounds in limb and head.

I brought them in to our first aid,
And found my little chap,
With foot and wrist, all neatly bound,
And ready for a nap.

Thus have the boys, with splendid grit
Shown of the stuff they're made,
Their fame now fills the whole wide world,
May their memory never fade.

Many sights such as these were seen round this salient, day after day, as our own forces and those of the enemy struggled for the mastery.

CHAP. 5

MEETING OLD FRIENDS

I HEARD one day that the 26th were out resting about five kilometers away, so walked out to see them, and found them at Locre near Kemmel Hill, and renewed acquaintances with many of the officers and men.

Their Fathers' Sons

I stood in the streets of old St. John,
On the shore of Fundy's bay,
And saw a crowd of soldiers
Like happy boys at play.
They had heard the call of the Empire,
And put the khaki on,
Had done their bit of training,
And were eager to be gone.
They marched along with a swinging pace,
And laughed and sang with glee,
As they trooped aboard the transport,
To sail across the sea.

I saw them again on England's shores,
Mid the din of war's alarms,
They were much smarter now at forming a squad,
Into fours, about turn, sloping arms.

They had done well at shooting,
Could throw well the bomb
As if a baseball it had been,
And didn't they shout when the general said, "Boys
You are fit for the front now, I ween."
Then they laughed and they joked
As they marched back to camp,
A smarter bunch never was seen.

It was many months after,
I saw them in France,
With their brothers of Britain and Gaul,
They had come out of action,
Where bullet and shell, like snowflakes,
In winter did fall.
They were now just a handful,
For many poor lads who went with them,
Had failed to come back.
Yet they laughed and they sang
As they had done before they went out,
To that awful attack.

I asked me this question
Of my chum by my side,
For I had donned khaki ere this,
"How is it the boys can joke, laugh, and sing
As if there was nothing amiss."
Said he: "My dear comrade, there's one reason why,
The boys are light hearted and gay
They are sons of their fathers,
And all the world knows
'Twas ever their fathers' way to laugh and to joke,
When troubles loom large,
As the boys are still doing today."

ONTARIO
MANITOBA
N.BRUN
ALBERTA

ST. JOHN'S YOUTH AND PIRACY GREET THE PRINCE.

Immediately following the inspection of the guard of honor commanded by Capt. R. A. Mayes, A.D.C. to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit to St. John, July 24 th, 1919, was greeted by hundreds of shouting, whistling children on a specially constructed grandstand, as seen in the picture appearing with D. Arnold Fox as director. While the last song was being sung a group of young ladies, dressed in white, with wreaths of maple leaves around their foreheads and carrying sticks, invading the area of the various previously, appeared through an opening in the stand and advancing and made a curtsy to the Prince. As each young lady reached the side of the midway and bowed, the Prince saluted. These young men in the and their representations were as follows, as Lady, Miss Rhoda Lloyd; Miss Dorothy, Miss Ida Belle Foster, Nova Scotia; Miss Alice Haynes, Prince Edward Island; Miss Olive Godfrey, Toronto, Miss Inez Hardy, Ontario, Miss Lilian Powell, Manitoba, Miss Phyllis Kenney, Saskatchewan; Miss Gertrude McMurray, Alberta; Miss Vera Andrews, British Columbia, Miss Grace Pickering, Montreal; Yvonne, Miss Kathleen Gordon, and the 3 Misses, Miss Dorothy Tweedie. The tableau was arranged under the direction of Miss Grace Hughes.

The photographer has caught St. John, represented by Miss Lloyd, in the act of welcoming the provinces of Canada forward to meet the Prince. Standing behind the young ladies are the usual pirates, of whom R. E. Crowley and W. L. McDiarmid are the two appearing in the picture, while George E. Day, member of the School Board having charge of the children's celebration, is seen standing between the young ladies representing Alberta and Quebec.

St. John's Youth and Beauty Greet the Prince.

Immediately following the inspection of the guard of honor commanded by Capt. R. A. Major, M.C., H. R. H. The Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit to St. John, August 15, 1919, was greeted by hundreds of singing school children massed on a specially constructed grandstand, as seen in the picture opposite, with D. Arnold Fox as director. While the last song was being sung a group of young ladies, dressed in white, with wreaths of maple leaves around their foreheads and carrying shields bearing the arms of the various provinces, appeared through an opening in the stand and advanced and made a curtesy to the Prince. As each young lady reached the edge of the platform and bowed, the Prince saluted. Those taking part in the tableau and their representations were as follows: St. John City, Miss Rhona Lloyd; New Brunswick, Miss Elizabeth Foster; Nova Scotia, Miss Alice Hayes; Prince Edward Island, Miss Ollie Golding; Quebec, Miss Inez Ready; Ontario, Miss Ethel Powell; Manitoba, Miss Phyllis Kenney; Saskatchewan, Miss Catherine McAvity; Alberta, Miss Jean Anderson; British Columbia, Miss Grace Kuhring; Northwest Territories, Miss Kathleen Sturdee, and the Yukon, Miss Dorothy Blizzard. The tableau was arranged under the direction of Miss Grace Kuhring.

The photographer has caught St. John, represented by Miss Lloyd, in the act of beckoning the provinces of Canada forward to meet the Prince. Standing behind the young ladies are the school principals, of whom R. R. Cormier and W. L. McDiarmid can be recognized in the picture, while George E. Day, member of the School Board having charge of the children's celebration, is seen standing between the young ladies representing Alberta and Quebec.

On my way back to camp again, I met a friend from the city who went over with the first contingent, and he told me many stories of the hardships the first crowd had to endure. I have tried to reproduce something of what he told me in the following:

The Soldier's Story

Was I out to the war, Why sure, sir,
For who could stay back there at home,
When the country one loves is in danger,
And the Hun threatens Empire and home.

I went out with the very first crowd, sir,
That sailed from fair Canada's shore,
And we had but few weeks to get ready,
The motherland needed us sore.

For the Hun had swept out across Belgium,
And over fair France like a blight,
Sweeping everything living before them,
Bright day soon became darkest night.

For oh, sir, the changes they wrought there,
Where all had been peace and content,
'Twas hard to believe less you'd seen it,
And yet it was clearly intent.

For churches and homes ground to powder,
Really couldn't have happened by chance,
Slain children, old men, outraged women,
Marked the road of that awful advance.

We first meet the monsters at "Plug Street,"
And oh, what a time we had there,
For whilst they had guns in abundance,
Our own we soon found were too rare.

And yet, sir, we held them quite firmly,
Nor could they break through our thin line,
And oh, weren't we proud when Sir Douglas,
Said, "Boys, you Canadians are fine."

But oh, sir, 'twas hard in the trenches,
With the mud from your feet to your waist,
In those days no dry, cosy dugouts,
Our trenches were dug in great haste.

And yet, sir, most of us lived through it,
Though many will never return,
As you see, sir, I left my best leg there,
To do without it, I'll soon learn.

I know that I played a man's part there,
For two years, a month and a day,
While many who might have been with us,
Cheered war films each night at the play.

Well, it's far easier cheering than fighting,
But if a hard job must be done,
I'd much rather play the part of a man
Than act like a coward and run.

That's the kind of stuff of which the boys of the first contingent were made, and the boys who held on to that same Ypres salient in spite of cloud-gas and liquid flame projectors.

Whilst in this salient, I was privileged to see many thrilling air fights, and too often our fellows had to fight against too great odds, for the German air force certainly held the supremacy in point of numbers and in better machines in those early days. In spite of this fact, however, our boys often came off victorious against tremendous odds.

It was just here on Easter Tuesday, 1916, that I had my first experience of an air raid and if I said I enjoyed myself I am afraid it would not be as near the truth as I like to get. Our corps had moved away to a new job some few days before, and a sergeant and I were left behind in charge of the store cars. At that time we were living on the rail, in the box cars that contained our various stores and material, but the rest of the corps occupied two huge huts in a field some two hundred yards up the road.

We had six big cars, and when the crowd moved away, it was found impossible to get an engine to take us along until eight days later. At 3.30 o'clock in the morning, three planes came over, and circling around the cars dropped some fifteen bombs around, but not one found its mark; one fell in the grounds of a hospital about a mile away, and started in a blaze. I ran over to see if the hospital was hit, but found the fire to be in a heap of rubbish in the grounds. When I got back to my car there was an exploded bomb just in front of the door. I certainly blessed the fellow who left the defective fuse in that bomb.

About 7.30 that same morning one of our own planes was seen painfully making its way back to its hangar. The following story told by the observer will explain the reason of his disabled condition.

Wings R. F. C.

He was just a mere kid, not yet reached his twenty,
But brave as they're making them now,
He already had many brave deeds to his credit,
But this is the best one, I vow.

He went up that morning just as it broke daylight,
To spy out the lay of the land,
Where the Hun had his trenches, his guns and munitions,
Such was his flight captain's command.

Did he think of the danger, why no, 'twere unlike him,
To take these things into account,
He had his chief's orders, so nothing more worried,
Straight upward he quickly did mount.

He climbed in a spiral, till height he had plenty,
Then struck o'er the trenches like bird on the wing,
Till twelve thousand feet o'er the lines of the Boches,
He swooped to three hundred, a venturesome thing.

He rose like a swallow, then dipped out of gunshot,
The observer snapshotted the whole of the trench,
His film had found out the machine guns laid ready,
A few miles of land with our boys' blood to drench.

His job neatly done, he turned his nose homeward,
With joy in his heart, and peace in his soul.
But 'twas too soon to whistle, for scarce had he started,
When seven Hun battle planes 'neath him did roll.

Was he scared? not a bit, for instead of retreating,
He drew their attention by opening a drum,
And sweeping right over the whole of the seven,
He let go his Lewis; things started to hum.

It was not very long till two out of action,
Dropped down through the air, and lit with a crash,
He turned for a nose dive, then quickly recovered,
And of the whole seven he made quite a hash.

The observer noticed the head of Wings falling,
And asked in alarm, "Are you hurt, old chap?"
He feebly replied, "Oh, hang it, it's nothing,
I'll steer the ship home, then I don't care a rap."

And surely enough he just managed to do it,
And landed us safely without a mishap,
But when you remember his right arm was shattered,
'Tis clear that our Wings is a brave little chap.

We left Belgium that same day and crossed the border into France. The Canadian cyclists had taken over the camp vacated by our boys, and the German planes coming over in the afternoon dropped several bombs, one of which fell on the camp and inflicted a number of casualties.

CHAP. 6

AT the close of a beautiful spring day, we found ourselves outside the gates of the quaintest, most old-fashioned town I have ever seen before or since. The little town of Bergues, with its five thousand population, dates back to the seventh century, and still maintains many of its old traditions. The old moat still surrounds its high, straight walls, the gateways, drawbridges and portcullis are still in use. The drawbridge is pulled in at 8.00 P.M. in winter and 9.00 P.M. in summer, when those outside must stay out till morning, and all inside must remain in.

We were the only British troops in the vicinity, and when the inhabitants learned we were Canadians nothing was too good for us. It was quite an agreeable change to get away from the mud and desolation of Belgium, and spend a time in a place untouched by the war; here was no destroyed village or town, no desolation. The country around was really fine, and as the spring emerged into glorious summer it became a perfect treat to wander through the leafy lanes, the fields of waving corn, and rich pasture land, to explore its ancient chateau and old villages, and hear some old grandfather tell of the bygone time, when the king held court in the neighborhood, or visited some of the great folks with his gaily dressed retinue.

Our work here consisted in putting in a length of line connecting two main lines and with the object of

shortening the time in bringing up supplies by about twenty-four hours, quite a consideration at this time. Whilst here our company No. 2 put several bridges across the Yser, and did some smart work in other ways, for which they were highly complimented. They were located for a time at a place we called International Corner, and it was "some" hot spot. The cars were just outside a wood in which a battery of our heavies were concealed, and what with the barking of the guns when in action and the bursting of enemy shells trying to silence our guns, it was no place for a tired man to sleep. I spent one or two nights here, but got no sleep. We lost quite a few men who were laboring for us here, English labor battalions, but were fortunate in losing none of our own men.

We should have spent a most happy time here had it not been for the frequency of the air raids, of which we had a superabundance. Often and often we have had them three and four times in one night, and night after night for weeks on end.

We had many close calls with our trains here, as we were all living in cars now, and as we had a long string of about forty of these cars, they were quite easily found by the photographic planes. They could also be readily located at night, as we were using sand ballast on our work, and under a bright moon the track lay like a broad yellow ribbon. To make matters worse we had not a thing with which to defend ourselves, no anti aircraft or machine gun.

On a beautiful night in June three raiders came over, and the sentry on the church tower in the town had either gone to sleep or was not sufficiently attentive, but he failed to ring the bell in alarm, and we only became conscious of the presence of the enemy by the crashing of the first bomb just outside the town, and a number of

French soldiers making a dash from their billet into a cellar were caught in the doorway by the second bomb, and nine were killed. They were buried next day in a straight row, side by side, in the pretty little cemetery inside the town gate. The sentry was court-martialed and paid the penalty for his carelessness. Two nights later in another raid, when five machines came over three times in one night, one bomb got three cars of our train, but luckily one was the second munitions stores, the other the cooking car, and the third in which men were sleeping was the least damaged, three men being badly injured.

Bergues was only nine kilometers or five and one-half miles from Dunkerque, a fair sized seaport which was one of our submarine bases, and a port into which much cross channel shipping came. I often walked along the canal bank on a Sunday morning when off duty, got dinner in the city, and walked out another two miles to a quiet little bathing and summer resort, Malo, from the beach of which place we could see the white cliffs of Dover on a clear day.

It was an everyday sight here to see the French and British seaplanes rising from the water on their practise stunts, and landing again when coming in. I went one day, and saw three French planes flying around and doing a multitude of stunts in the air, such as circling round the tower of the church, looping the loop and flying wrong side up. After a spell over the town, the three struck out over the harbor, and coming back some ten minutes later, I found they had been joined by a fourth.

They flew around in company twice or three times, and passing out to sea again one of them swooped down low over the harbor, and released three bombs in quick succession, aimed evidently at the submarines and gunboats resting there. None of them were damaged,

however, but one bomb landed on the wharf and killed nine people and wounded fourteen. The admiral's chauffeur was sitting in the automobile waiting for the admiral to come on shore, and one piece went clean through the door, and passing along both his legs took them off as if with a knife. I went over to the hospital to help with the dressing of the wounded.

The plane which dropped the bombs "beat it" out to sea, followed by the other three, where he was brought down and both pilot and observer lost their lives. It appears it was a French plane that had fallen into the hands of the Germans, and the daring aviator had conceived the idea of slipping in unnoticed and working havoc with the shipping in the harbor.

On another occasion I was in Dunkerque on business for the corps and an air raid took place which had rather serious results for the town, as stores and houses were destroyed.

One bomb fell right in front of a big department store similar to M. R. A.'s of this city and the explosion made a hole some fifteen feet deep, cutting through the water and gas main both, and it was a curious sight to see a jet of water and one of fire rising many feet in the air side by side. The store, of course, was completely wrecked.

The middle of August found us bidding good-bye to the hospitable people of Bergues, and on the move to the little town of Bray Dunnes on the Belgian coast border. We had used thousands of carloads of sand for ballast on the work we had been doing so far, and our steam shovel had made great inroads into the sand dunes of this coast, and still more rails were required to run the shovel closer to its work, and to allow more cars being used to send the sand along.

We stayed here some three weeks, and much enjoyed ourselves. It had been part of my duty all this time to

go with the Q.M.S. each morning to draw the daily rations for our crowd, taking a three-ton motor lorry for the purpose, and every third morning taking an extra lorry for hay and oats and petrol. We had about fifty head of horse of the C.A.S.C. attached to us at this time. We drew our rations from the little station yard at Castre, sometimes from the train, and sometimes the articles were dumped in piles on the ground, when the lifting of bales of hay, sacks of oats and cases of petrol became hard work for a man of small stature.

One rainy day I slipped on the wet yard with a heavy case on my shoulder, and in seeking to regain my equilibrium I displaced some internal organs which caused me intense pain. I fainted twice after getting back to camp, and late at night collapsed completely. Our own doctor gave me two injections of morphine and took me away to hospital in his own automobile to Malo, some five miles away, where I was examined and strapped up like an Egyptian mummy, and when I regained consciousness in the morning I found myself in the most pleasant surroundings imaginable. The hospital was run by the Friends Ambulance Unit, men and women of the Quaker persuasion who could not serve in the ranks as soldiers, and thus cause suffering and death, but who were willing to do what they could to save life and alleviate suffering. One of the orderlies in my ward was a son of the Rowntree cocoa firm.

Whilst there I saw much suffering caused by painful wounds received in action on both land and sea, many patients being brought in from our gunboat, torpedo and other craft making Dunkerque their base.

CHAP. 7

ON THE MOVE

WHEN I rejoined my corps a month later, I found them moved to a place on the French canal system named St. Pierrebrook. By this time the cry for more shells had reached England with such persistence as to cause Lloyd George, now the British premier, to come out from the realm of politics and enter the business arena, and reorganize the whole munition machinery then existing, so as to increase production, to convert already existing machinery that was turning out peace time merchandise into shell making plants. At the same time, Sir Eric Geddes under the premier's direction, was organizing a much quicker method of getting the shells up to the front line. It was for this purpose that we were sent to the latter place to construct a large wharf on the canal, and a large material yard a mile away in which was used fifty miles of steel.

When our work was completed it was possible to tow the deep-sea barges direct from the English rivers to the French canal, without the delay of loading and unloading to and from train and boat in England and to and from barge at the French port of landing, thus saving two and often three days in transit. Two months here saw the job well and faithfully done, and we had the congratulations of those in authority.

While this work had been carried out with half our men and headquarters, and the help of a battalion of labor troops given to us for the purpose (the 12th Royal West Surrey's), our No. 2 company was engaged in a very important piece of work, the construction of another large material yard at Audreiuq in which was used many miles of steel.

With increased railway facilities it was found that the rolling stock in the hands of the French and Belgians was not sufficient for the needs of this time, so our men were set the task of building one thousand steel railway cars to be used in transporting munitions from the canal wharf already spoken of, to the various parts of the British line, and so well and quickly was the work done that the building of another five hundred was decided upon.

I have seen many of these cars since, riddled like pepper casters with enemy shot and shell and flying splinters as they carried along food for the guns with which to blast their way through the Somme defences and the supposedly impregnable Hindenburg line. Whilst working on this job, our fellows had a rather unpleasant experience which happened as follows:

There had been stacked in the yard huge piles of shells of different sizes, to the amount of some 20,000 tons, and one night a solitary German plane returning from an attack on Dunkerque with a couple of bombs to spare, dropped them on the yard, and one of them fell on a stack of big shells and started them going, and the whole yard went up in explosion after explosion, that tore off the roofs of the houses in town, broke all the windows, and shattered many walls. Fortunately unlike Halifax there were few deaths, but quite a few suffered wounds.

The incident furnished a lesson for those in authority, as no more shells were stacked in such big piles, or so close together again.

It was now the end of October, and preparation was steadily going on for the spring offensive which began again on the Somme in 1917, and we were warned to be in readiness to move at any time. About the middle of November we began to pack up our machinery and materials, and the first week in December we got our orders to move on to Pushvillers near Candus, where we put in a week or two on maintenance, and then began the line which took us over the Somme. There was much heavy fighting going on at this time, and ground was gained more by the yard than the mile. Our heavies were pounding at the reinforced concrete defences around Mailley Maillet, Serre and Pusieux, the woods of that section, Saare wood, Trones wood, Delville wood, and others were being searched with great diligence by our artillery in positions around Souastre, Courcelles, Collin Camps, etc.

Christmas, 1916, came around and having heard where the second division was, I asked for a two-day pass and started out to find my boys; one had been drafted from the 115th to the 24th, and the other from the 140th to the 25th.

The first part of my journey was by train to Bethune, but the train pulled up at a small station three miles outside the town, and the French authorities refused to let the train proceed, as the Germans were shelling Bethune. They gave us the option of walking to our destination, or returning by the same train. I had started out to see the boys and decided to go on. Arriving in the town, I found the enemy was searching the town with one gun at three-minute intervals.

Passing along one of the streets, I heard a most unearthly shriek overhead, and the next moment a terrible explosion followed, and the front of a three-story house went sailing into the air carrying part of the furniture with it. All the afternoon high explosive shells continued to fall in the town. Much damage was done and there was some loss of life. Bethune was a pretty place

of about 60,000 inhabitants and was later on in the war set on fire and pretty well burned up.

I continued my journey through New-le-Mines Hirsin and on to Bully Grenay. Passing through real war land, from Hirsin onward, the roads were packed with every conceivable kind of transport, all going into or out of the line.

At this time of the year mud and slush were everywhere. No snow had yet fallen, but considerable rain had descended, and the ditches were well filled and in many places overflowing the roads, many of which had been constructed as emergency roads, and had no solid bottom. These were very soon veritable quagmires and made walking very unpleasant, and it was no uncommon sight to see motor lorries, automobiles, etc., which having ventured too near the edge of the road had slithered into the ditch. Along such roads as this I made my way for fifteen kilometers, and it was pitch dark when I reached the village of Fossend, where I found the eldest boy and passed the night in his billet. After night fell, it became difficult to get along, the traffic going every way filled the roads, and the guns on both sides continually firing shells overhead. The very lights and French rockets that were being sent up all along the line contributed to make one of the most hideous evenings I have ever experienced, and when I reached my destination at 9.30, after walking from two o'clock I assure you I felt good and tired, and lost no time in getting to sleep on the bare floor of an empty bedroom, that is empty of all furniture. There were already fourteen sleeping there and I made the fifteenth, but I have slept in worse places since.

Next day being Christmas Day, I saw the R. S. M. early, and secured the boy's release for the day, and we went in search of the younger boy, and found him in a little town some three miles away. He, too, was granted a day's leave, and together we had a real good time.

CHAP. 8

HUNS DRIVEN BACK

JANUARY and February, 1917, were marked by much heavy fighting with but little gain, but one Sunday morning in March after three days' heavy bombardment of the enemy position by our artillery, we had orders to stand to, as our forward positions had lost touch with the enemy.

During the Saturday night there had been a very heavy fog, and the enemy had taken advantage of it to effect their retreat from a position that had become too hot for them to hold. Our cavalry was sent out to establish touch with him, and found he had retreated to a depth of ten miles on a twenty-mile front, and on the Monday morning we had orders to bring on the line as quickly as possible, so that supplies might be brought up with all possible speed.

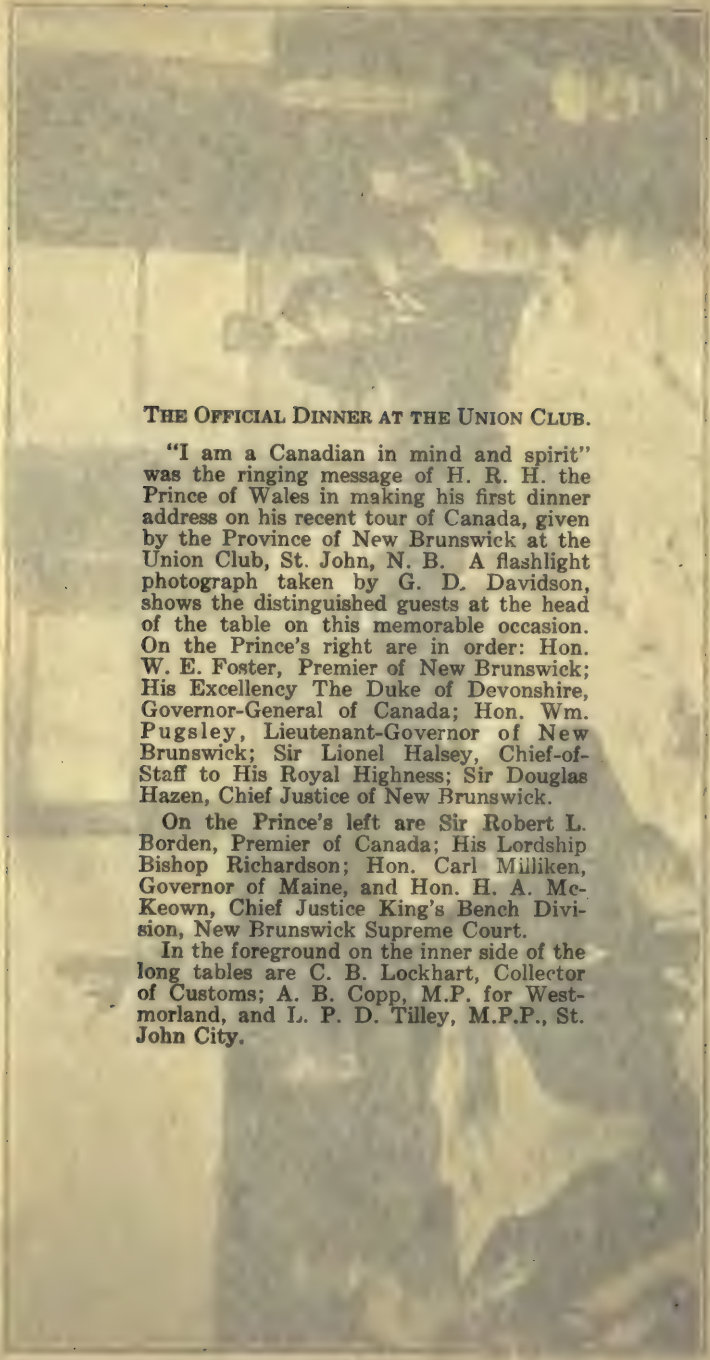
Our corps had already carried the new line from Puschvillers through Raineheval, Bertrancourt and Belle Eglise to Acheux, where there was a large aerodrome, and we became quite well acquainted with some of the boys who were there. One in particular was a smart little chap, and the following will give you one of his days:

A Picnic in France

You may talk about your picnics,
And your days down by the sea,
Of your shies at old Aunt Sally
And your marlocks with the girls;

Of your funny Punch and Judy,
And your crafty fortune teller,
Of your sport upon the skating rink,
And the ballroom's giddy whirls.
But now I want to tell you
Of a real prime piece of fun
A chap may have while
Serving at the front.
Just join the Royal Flying Corps,
They'll quickly teach you how
To do a real comic little stunt.
A pilot of the R. F. C.
Went on his daily round,
He had on board a bunch of little bombs,
He dropped them on a battery
Belonging to the Huns,
Then struck for home,
In fear of getting glommed.
With this he wasn't satisfied,
So started out again,
This time he met a squad of German planes.
He got well up above them,
Then he opened up his gun,
And got three from the squadron
For his pains.
The other two he shattered,
And as he felt quite fresh,
He looked around
In search of further spoil.
He spied a group of Fritzies
Amassing in the rear,
At sight of which his blood began to boil,
He fixed into his Lewis,
Another little drum,
And dropping from his dizzy height above

THE OFFICIAL DINNER AT THE LAKE CLUB.



THE OFFICIAL DINNER AT THE UNION CLUB.

"I am a Canadian in mind and spirit" was the ringing message of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales in making his first dinner address on his recent tour of Canada, given by the Province of New Brunswick at the Union Club, St. John, N. B. A flashlight photograph taken by G. D. Davidson, shows the distinguished guests at the head of the table on this memorable occasion. On the Prince's right are in order: Hon. W. E. Foster, Premier of New Brunswick; His Excellency The Duke of Devonshire, Governor-General of Canada; Hon. Wm. Pugsley, Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick; Sir Lionel Halsey, Chief-of-Staff to His Royal Highness; Sir Douglas Hazen, Chief Justice of New Brunswick.

On the Prince's left are Sir Robert L. Borden, Premier of Canada; His Lordship Bishop Richardson; Hon. Carl Milliken, Governor of Maine, and Hon. H. A. McKeown, Chief Justice King's Bench Division, New Brunswick Supreme Court.

In the foreground on the inner side of the long tables are C. B. Lockhart, Collector of Customs; A. B. Copp, M.P. for Westmorland, and L. P. D. Tilley, M.P.P., St. John City.

He raked the gathering masses,
With the bullets that were in it,
Then sailed away as gentle as a dove.
Thus sailing low behind the lines
He spied a motor car,
And saw the ensign of the German staff.
He turned his gun upon it,
As he flew lower still
And on that car he put up quite a strafe.
He must now be getting homeward,
The light began to fade,
But still he had another drum in stock.
He spied just in the distance
A mass of gathering men,
And hailed them with a joyous German "hoch."
They gladly hailed him back again,
But soon they wished they hadn't,
When he opened up his gun
They had a shock.
Now that's the kind of picnic,
You get in Northern France,
More funny, too, than fooling with the girls,
Or sweating on the skating rink,
Or shying for cigars,
Or turning in the dance's giddy whirl.

From Acheux on to Collin Camps our line had extended, and we had reached the neighborhood of Euston Dump, which many of the returned boys will remember we occupied when the retreat of the spring of 1917 took place. We had now to continue the line over the Serre ridge, and along the valley on the other side.

Two days after the retreat I went over the whole devastated area that had been evacuated, and it became a wonder to me, a wonder that has by no means lessened

with the lapse of time, how any of the men lived through or endured that awful bombardment. For a matter of seven or eight miles as far as eye could see, not a thing remained standing above the ground. Perhaps the following lines will best describe the change that the bombardment had brought about:

Two Pictures

A lovely stretch of country,
In the region of the Somme,
Made as nice a piece of scenery,
As ever you looked upon.

The beautiful green of the grasses,
The deeper green of the trees,
The sweet white cots of the peasants,
Where they hoped to spend years of ease.

The cows grazing out in the clover,
The corn waving gold in the field,
The sun shining golden upon it,
To bring forth a rich golden yield.

The blossoms so sweet in the orchard,
The apple, the cherry, the pear,
Seemed as fair as Eden to look upon,
No sign of destruction was there.

A dear little church where the peasants,
Went each Sabbath to worship and pray,
A cross with a Christ stretched upon it,
From the church, stood just o'er the way.

The war cloud loomed on the horizon,
No larger than any man's hand,
Then broke with a crash as of thunder,
Hun war lust enveloped the land.

And gone was that sweet stretch of country,
Tramped were the grasses so green,
Slain were the trees tall and stately,
The orchards no more there were seen.

Gone the sweet homes of the peasants,
Gone were the peasants as well,
And what seemed a piece out of heaven,
Was now like a corner of hell.

The church where the people had worshipped,
So quickly was razed to the ground,
And the fields where the corn had been waving,
With corpses were strewn all around.

The cross and the Christ had gone down with the rest,
As shot and shell flew o'er the ground,
But the broken Christ still raised one hand in protest,
'Gainst the horrors that lay all around.

That was surely the strangest thing I have ever seen, the broken figure of the Christ just as a shell had broken it from the crucifix, the legs broken off at the knees, and one arm gone at the shoulder, the figure left standing in the soft ground just as it fell, and the one hand as if upraised in protest against all the horrors of the situation, and horrors there certainly were! Thousands of shell-holes were there so close together that they interlaced, and it was difficult to find a footing on the edge to keep from falling in. Littered all around were the severed limbs of the combatants, heads, arms, legs and headless

trunks were to be seen among the equipment and accoutrements of war, dead horses with cruel rents in their flanks and breasts, legs and heads gone, and broken limbers and guns, machine guns and rifles were strewed everywhere.

The rain had fallen two nights previously, and then a severe frost had followed, and the rain in the shell holes and craters had frozen over, and formed a glass-like surface which could be seen through very distinctly. In one of them was an English lad lying on his back dead, with his face just under the ice, and grasped in his hand was the Mills bomb he had been in the act of throwing when the concussion from some big shell that had burst near had killed him.

In another one farther on was a boy sitting quite erect evidently killed by the same means; he had been having a snack to eat, as there was a piece of biscuit on his lap and an open tin of bully also.

Farther along still, in a crater, where there had either been heavy fighting, or a shell had taken heavy toll of some platoon, the water was thickly tinged with blood, and like the rest of the holes thinly frozen over, and several bodies lying there. Over this ground then we had to take the line with the utmost dispatch, and so quickly was this done with the labor troops allotted to us, that inside of three weeks the first ration train pulled into Achiet-le-grand, followed by a trainload of ammunition.

The destruction we saw as we passed from village and town to village again is perhaps best described in the following lines:

Scenes from the Somme

I tramped across the battlefield,
  Of the Ancre and the Somme
And sad were the sights of carnage and blood,
  My weary eyes gazed upon.

Our trenches all battered and broken,
By the shells from the enemy's guns,
Where our boys had sat tight through the winter,
Till the spring let them loose on the Huns.

When the order went round to get ready
For the advance which the Generals had planned,
A more eager bunch of young fellows,
You couldn't have found in the land.

For they knew that the guns so long waited,
Had reached them from over the main.
Well manned and munitioned to help them,
The lost land of France to regain.

So they leapt o'er the trench tops like heroes,
Nor halted when comrades did fall,
Till they swept back the Huns from their trenches and guns,
Then fog hid the land like a pall.

To say that the Huns were delighted,
Is but to state mildly the case,
For they couldn't stand up, though supported by Krupp,
They retreated all over the place.

And here is the mind of the Hun seen,
For as he went back on his tracks,
He blew up the houses and fouled all the wells,
And felled all the trees with the axe.

And many a once happy village,
A smouldering ruin now lies,
And many a family seek their lost home,
With the tears streaming out of their eyes.

But that's not the worst by a long shot,
For many a man seeks his babe,
And the wife that he kissed when he left her,
To find them both claimed by the grave.

A shell from the guns of the Germans,
Struck the house which they once called their home,
And the saving of years and the comfort once theirs
In a moment was shattered and gone.

Ah, well, there's a time comes for reckoning,
And when the long looked for day comes,
'Twill be better by far for Gomorrah and Sodom,
Than it will for the land of the Huns.

CHAP. 9

USELESS DESTRUCTION

BAPAUME had literally been blown to pieces, and Albert had suffered badly at the hands of the destroyers; fine engineering works had all their machinery deliberately smashed, the fine Basilica with its huge monument of the Virgin and Child over the front of the sacred edifice, had been rendered absolutely ruinous, and the holy figure now leaned over the sidewalk at an alarming angle, and was the source of much interest to all troops passing through that place.

All the parts of the British front over which I have travelled, from Nieuport on the coast down to Peronne, the churches have been the first to suffer. Only one building in Bapaume was left practically undamaged; this was the Town Hall, and here the people gathered, to celebrate the fact that the town had been recovered from the hands of the enemy. The townspeople returning from the distant towns and villages to which they had fled, led by the mayor, held a meeting in the hall, and just as the people had left the building a delayed action mine went up, and many were injured by the falling debris. This was three weeks after the Huns had left, and the mine had been cunningly laid in anticipation of some such gathering, or in hope of getting soldiers who might have used the place as a billet. As we came to rest in Achiet-le-grand, I could not prevent my mind from

turning back to the awful sights I had seen in the last few weeks, and I sat down and wrote the following lines:

War

Oh, God of Heaven, how strange it seems,
To see the sun's bright morning rays,
To hear the birds on joyful wing,
Uplift to Thee their songs of praise,
And yet above and all around,
Is heard the sound of deadly gun,
And far and wide the battle ground,
Is strewn with dead, Ally and Hun.
Despite two thousand years of truth,
Which first streamed forth from Galilee,
That men to men o'er all the earth,
Should to each other brothers be
And one their elder brother, He
Should lead them up to God.
Oh, can it be that truth has failed,
Or we poor mortals did not heed,
But each for our own vantage strived,
Thus giving chance to lust and greed.
And other sins of devils sown,
To spring as tares among the wheat,
And now to fullest harvest grown
The reaper grim with eager feet,
To gather both the wheat and tares,
Doth stalk throughout a war swept land.
Oh, God, they fall, we see them lie,
Strewn out upon the battle plain,
Their severed limbs and gaping wounds,
Now cry to us for help in vain.
To Thee we leave the broken clay
Which to its mother dust must turn,

THE MILITARY CEMETERY AT AUBIGNY, FRANCE, AS DESCRIBED BY SAPPER BRINDLE IN THIS PARTICULAR CHAPTER. GRAVE OF GUNNER FRANK H. LEDFORD, ST. JOHN, N. B., IN THE FOREGROUND.

In Flanders' Fields

In Flanders' Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That marked our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead; short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.

—McCRAE.

Their souls we know with Thee remain,
And while our hearts with anguish yearn,
For one last word with those we love
For one last grip of friendly hand,
We know that safe with Thee above
In that fair, glorious, heavenly land,
The saint, the sinner purified,
By blood of Thine from side to hand,
Once more shall stand before Thy throne,
And things we failed to understand,
Shall then to each be clearly shown.

During this time our No. 2 company had been building a line which proved of much value to us as a corps, and to many others as will be seen later on.

The line was known as the Authey valley line, and ran from Doullens right through the valley by way of Freschvillers, Authieurl, Orville, Sarton, Coyneux and on to Collin Camps, where a branch was also taken to Hebuterne, when the powers that be decided not to continue it any farther. Collins Camps itself was on the line from Candus, and this line as before stated we continued along by Serre, Pusieux and to Achiet-le-grand.

Having by our advance, referred to in the foregoing pages, caused the enemy to straighten out the big dent that he had made previously in our line, there now existed a most dangerous dent in his own line. The ground, if marked out on the map, would have something of an egg shaped formation, the narrower end had been in our line; the wider end was now in his line, where he now rested on the Arras, Croisselles, Bertincourt, Peronne St. Quentin line, the object in holding up here evidently being to give him a chance to get as much of his equipment and stores as it was possible safely harbored behind his Hindenburg line.

This ground had been made famous by the Battle of Marlincourt, which is now the graveyard of the 9th Durhams; Courcellette, where the Canadian Scottish, our own 26th, the 25th and the 22nd Battalion left so many dead; in the attack on the Regina trench; Le Transloy, Le Sars, Ligny Thilloy, Le Beurs, Murval, Ginchy, Combles and other places including such towns and villages as Neuville, Vitasse, St. Ledger and Ecoust, Bullecourt, and Queant north of Bapaume. In line with Bapaume and to the south Hermes, Bertincourt, Ruyalcourt, Ytres, Bus and Fins were being held stubbornly by the enemy. New troops were being tried out at these points.

The Canadians were now withdrawn from the Somme and were holding the line north of Arras. Around Ytres and Bus the Lancashire Brigade was being tested in a very warm corner; they had been brought over from Egypt and were now introduced to a different type of warfare.

On one occasion they were treated to a particularly heavy dose of gas sent over by shells which made no explosion, but just corroded very quickly and released the poisonous gas. They were joking about the number of "dud" shells the enemy were sending over, when after an hour or so the men began to drop in scores and many of them died. At the same time, August 17, the Australians were having their own time at Bullecourt which was in No Man's land, and so heavy had been the slaughter that for three whole weeks neither side could go near the place. When the enemy finally withdrew, our sanitary section went in and cleaned up.

CHAP. 10

PEACE AND PLENTY

I had received a letter from Charles Ledford, the secretary of Marlborough Lodge Sons of England, telling me that his son, Frank, had died of wounds, and also where he was buried, with a request that I would try and see his grave. Having a Sunday to spare I took my bicycle and rode out to Aubigny some thirty miles distant from our camp.

Leaving the war zone behind I came to what might be called the fringe of the war, for here was left behind the destruction and desolation and ravages of war, and I came upon a line of green verdure clad hills and vales, where the flowers were blooming in garden and hedgerow, where the corn was waving in the field, and the happy voices of the children rang over the meadows; such a contrast to what I had seen in the last two years. I found the cemetery at Aubigny in a fine location, and beautifully kept by two soldier comrades who were unfit for service up the line.

More than two thousand crosses were standing in straight rows line after line, like men on parade; beneath them lay the men who had given all they had to give in freedom's cause.

Canada in Flanders

In a quiet graveyard sleeping,
  Lie the men from old St. John,
With many a comrade near them,
  From far Saskatchewan.

There are men from Manitoba,
And men from far B. C.
Alberta's sons, who manned the guns,
That nations might be free.

There are men from all around Quebec,
And from Ontario,
Who when the call of Empire came,
Neglected not to go.

There were men from Nova Scotia,
And rugged Newfoundland,
Who stemmed the tide of German pride,
Nor yielded their demand.

Men of the line, and men of the guns,
Men from the office and farmers' sons,
Men from the woods who delivered the goods,
For which the call was made.

Men who came early,
Men who came late,
There they lie in quiet state,
At peace in the rural shade.

There's Canada of the Northland,
There's Canada's sunny plains,
And Canada now in Flanders,
So long as earth remains.

There let them lie, under old Mount St. Eloi around which so many of them fell, with Vimy Ridge standing grim sentinel in the near distance.

August and September were very hot months this year, and the boys marching to and from the line suffered

greatly in consequence. I remember seeing the 4th Gloucesters march out from the left of Bullecourt, and as they passed us they were dropping on the road like sheep. I worked over one young lad for nearly an hour before I got him straightened out; he was cramped in every muscle.

In the last week of August I again got a two-day pass and went to find my eldest boy, somewhere north of Arras, and on my way I had rather an exciting time.

The enemy was singing his morning hymn of hate accompanied by a bombardment of the town, and just as I entered the outskirts a shell fell inside a house that had been partly damaged by a previous shell. There was one wall left standing and the explosion blew down the remaining wall just as I passed on my bicycle. Fortunately none of the flying bricks struck me. As I rode up the approach to the bridge near the station, another shell cut through both sides of the iron bridge, and on passing over it on the other side, a third high explosive brought down a three-story house right across the road, and I had to go down the next street. Once through the town everything was fairly quiet.

I located the 2nd Division camped under Mount St. Eloi, and soon found the 24th and learned from the boys the story of Vimy and the part played by the Canadians in that famous event, particularly the glorious record of the 22nd, 24th, 25th and 26th battalions, the latter from New Brunswick.

Vimy

The word ran along the trenches,
It's over the top, boys, tonight,
We were not very far from Arras,
To mention the place isn't right.

Our gunners for days played the dickens,
With the trenches of Heine and Fritz,
Where rows upon rows of new wire,
Were very soon broken to bits.

The night was quite dark, but the morning
Gave promise of breaking up fine,
And just as my watch showed the time, 3.15,
We started for Fritz's front line.

The shells of the Boches burst full in our face,
Our guns roared out way behind,
From the planes overhead came the crashing of bombs,
We blew up the places we'd mined.

In that great pandemonium we crossed no man's land,
Led on by our own barrage fire,
Till in front of the trench we were ordered to take,
We were caught on the enemy's wire.

It seems that a stretch some 500 yards long,
And nearly one hundred yards deep,
Had been missed by our guns 'ere we started to charge,
'Twas enough to make any man weep.

All the same we had to get through it,
For our chums on the left and the right,
Went on with a bound, never halting,
And got all the Germans in sight.

We hacked and we cut at the wire,
Till at length we found a way through,
Then after our chums in a hurry,
Till we reached the Boche's line too.

But, oh, we paid dear for the hold up,
For half our battalion was gone,
But we finished the job that they gave us,
And the ridge of old Vimy was won.

Our own railway line was now through Velu having come by way of Bapaume and Tregnicourt wood, the object being to get as far as possible in view of an event to transpire later.

CHAP. 11

A STIRRING SIGHT AND AFTER

STANDING on the bridge above Achiet-le-Grand station, a bridge by the way that we had built, I saw one of the finest sights a man can witness, —two battalions of Scotch Highlanders marching up the line after a three weeks' rest. The steady march of the men, the swing of the kilt, and the skirl of the pipes certainly quickened the flow of blood in a man's veins.

Two thousand and fifty of Britain's best men marched by that day, in all the glory of their young manhood. Three days later fifteen men got off the train at the same station, and next day seven men and three pipers came along, all that was left of the gallant two thousand and fifty that swung by three days before on their way to Passchendaele.

Passchendaele

They tell of Balaclava,
  And the charge our heroes made
Upon the deadly Russian guns,
  Our gallant light brigade.

We're told of how Lord Cardigan,
  Went forth, last of his race,
And bravely led his gallant men,
  Those murderous guns to face.

The Prince Presenting Colors to 26th Battalion.

One of the historic ceremonies performed by H. R. H. The Prince of Wales when in St. John, August 15, 1919, was the presentation of colors to the 26th Battalion which appeared on Barrack Square under the command of Lieut.-Col. W. R. Brown, D.S.O. with bar. The photograph opposite was taken as the Prince was speaking of the gallant record of the 26th, immediately following the presentation of colors.

The color party on this occasion, with Sergt. S. C. Wright, as pivotman, was under the command of Major P. D. McAvity with Lieutenants L. McC. Ritchie and E. C. Armstrong as subalterns.

The colors were brought forward and laid upon the drum pile by Mrs. J. Pope Barnes, first vice-regent, and Mrs. J. H. Frink, second vice-regent, and between them Mrs. E. Atherton Smith, regent of the Royal Standard Chapter, I.O.D.E., which provided the colors.

The ladies placed the colors across each other unsheathed with the King's on top. Then came the ceremony of consecration which was very impressive, the dedication being pronounced by Rev. Capt. Kuhring. At the finish of the ceremony Major McAvity lifted the colors from the drum pile and handed them to the Prince, who in turn presented them to the subalterns of the color party, kneeling upon their right knee, the King's color to Lieutenant Ritchie, the regimental color to Lieutenant Armstrong.

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We read six hundred of them went,
Two hundred just, came back,
And horse and rider perished both,
In that terrible attack.

The last great war has furnished us,
With other deeds that tell,
How thousands others bravely charged,
And nobly fighting fell.

The Highlanders of Scotland,
Charged up old Passchendaele,
But few there were who e're returned,
To tell that awful tale.

I saw them march a thousand strong,
To storm that frowning height,
Just two days later they returned,
With fifteen men in sight.

Just fifteen tattered, wounded men,
Around their wounded chief,
Their daring, as I heard it told,
Was almost past belief.

They rested only long enough,
To fill their ranks once more,
Then up those heights they stormed again,
Like Highland men of yore.

As the darkness of approaching winter nights now closed in, strange things were going on around us, of which we did not know the portent. Divisions were being brought out of the line, and others were taking their places; night after night through the gathering darkness

men in thousands marched quietly up through Bapaume. We noticed several strange things here,—that more divisions went in than came out, that there was plenty of transport and very little artillery, and later I saw a great number of tanks being loaded at a small wayside station, and then mysterious orders were issued, which made it a crime to speak or ask questions of any columns passing along the road.

We had some sort of vague idea that an attack on Cambrai was preparing, and expected to hear the artillery preparation start up any time. You may judge of our surprise then when we had the news over the wire one morning from our advance position that the tanks had led a charge against the enemy and he had broken before us, and our cavalry was riding for Cambrai. This was great news, for it meant that the great Hindenburg line, in which the Germans placed such faith, had been badly bent, if not broken.

This news cabled to England set the joybells ringing in London and made glad hearts all the world over. Our joy was turned to sorrow two days later, for the enemy had still enough reserves to turn the tables on us, and recover almost all they had lost, not quite however, and they had to pay dearly for what they got back.

There was an awful state of affairs around Havrincourt wood, where there was an advance dressing station. The O. C. in charge was wondering whatever to do with about two hundred stretcher cases lying out in the open, and the shells falling around, when some of our fellows came on the scene. He asked if there were no means of getting the men away, as the ambulance cars could not get up.

A telephone message reached headquarters from the sergeant in charge of our party, and a string of box cars was sent up from Bapaume, and every case was brought

down, not as easy as it sounds however, as one shell shattered the end car, and another fell on the track ahead of the engine, which plunged into the hole, and it took over two hours to get the line clear again.

We maintained two trains a day until the situation was cleared up. Our corps was warmly congratulated for the part we played, and the Colonel was given the D.S.O., whilst several other decorations were handed out to the boys who took part. There was a detachment of the 14th American Engineers working in this section at the time, and they showed great gallantry by rushing into the breach with pick and shovel and such arms as they found lying around, and certainly helped much to save the situation.

CHAP. 12

SAMMY PUTS ONE OVER

IN line with the concluding words of the preceding chapter I want to relate a rather amusing incident to show the resourcefulness of the American soldier.

Coming along the Bapaume road late one night in Christmas week, I was accosted in the darkness by five men, one in the uniform of an officer of the American forces, which party turned out to be from another detachment of the 14th A.E.F. The officer asked me if I could direct him to a canteen. I told him it would be very difficult to find one open at that hour of the night. They informed me that the O.C. of the detachment was away on leave, and he being in charge was anxious to give the boys a good time, so wanted to get a few things to help along.

I told him if he would come back to camp with me I would do what I could to get our canteen man to open up for him, so the whole party came along and bought up quite a supply, including two bottles of whiskey and one of wine.

When leaving our place, the young lieutenant very kindly invited myself, our R.S.M. and the Q.M.S to go over and dine with them on the Sunday. We accepted the invitation and needless to say showed up at the appointed time, as some slight reference had been made to turkey. Before we went in to dinner one of the

party said he had an apology to make to us before taking us in, as they had "taken us in" once already. After the explanation, we went in to dinner and were introduced to the young lieutenant, but shorn of all the glory surrounding a couple of stars and lo, he stood revealed as the detachment's cook.

The officers' uniform had been surreptitiously borrowed from the doctor's quarters. The boys seemed afraid that we would resent the way they had put one over on us, but we showed them that Canadians can be good sports, and so joined heartily in the laugh against ourselves. After that incident there were frequent visits exchanged between their camp and ours, and we found them a fine bunch of boys. During the bright nights around Christmas time we were having a hard time with the aeroplanes and this continued through January and February, 1918. The following lines describe a scene that was all too common just then:

The End of A Perfect Day

The sun went down in a sea of blood,
On a beautiful day in May,
The moon shone out with her beams so bright
On the soldiers as they lay.

The bees had worked through the live long day,
And robbed the flowers of their best,
The corn that had waved in a golden sheen,
Was now in the moonbeams dressed.

The birds of the day had sung their songs,
The linnet, the lark and the thrush,
The nightingale now took up the strain,
In the silent midnight hush.

A sound is heard in the distant sky,
Like the drone of a single bee,
The soldiers raise their drowsy heads,
But nothing do they see.

And back to sleep they sink again,
But nearer draws the sound,
The planes are coming, listen, boys,
The sentry's word goes round.

We scurry away as fast as we can,
To our shelters 'neath the trees,
But quick as we are, they are quicker still,
Their cargo to release.

The bombs drop down with a shriek and a roar,
As they tear up the old camp ground,
And the sun looks out on a field of blood,
When he starts his morning round.

An incident occurred during one of these air raids which gave me a new light on the Chinese. I had always looked upon the Oriental as being an individual void of humor, but I had to revise my opinion. One night, very cold it was, too, the enemy's raiders came over and used the small bombs which we call grass cutters, on account of the way they explode, making the shrapnel spread very low and being used more particularly where troops are encamped.

Two of these had been dropped on the camp of a bunch of Chinese who were attached to us for labor, and had wounded quite a few of them. Those who were uninjured went to an infantry camp in the next field and begged a supply of Mills bombs, with which they visited a prisoner's cage, and slowly taking the pins from the

bombs, fired them in among the prisoners, and with them fired the following question:

"You like um, plomb? Eh, you like um plomb?" and with this exclamation fired another bomb.

It seemed very comical at the time, but I grant you it was much more amusing to us who looked on than to the prisoners, many of whom had to be hurried away to hospital.

About the end of February I got my Christmas parcel, and I wish some of you could have seen some of the parcels when they reached us. Perhaps the following lines will give the reader some idea of the way the care and forethought of the senders was counter-balanced by the handling the parcels got en route.

Our Parcel

There was me and the tailor, Bill Langton, and Jones,
We all bunked together, somewhere on the Somme,
We took equal shares of all that came to us,
And never disputed, and never looked glum.

Whatever the cook felt like handing out to us,
From bully beef, biscuits to porridge and jam,
We all shared alike, and then on each pay-night,
We went to the tuck shop our stomachs to cram.

Our parcels from home were always divided,
With absolute fairness, so no one could kick,
But one day a parcel was brought to our dugout,
Which, when it was opened, just turned us all sick.

There was chocolate and matches, a clear breach of rule there,
Tobacco and cigarettes and cake, sure enough,
But we couldn't separate any one of the contents,
They were so stuck together, now, wasn't that tough?

Of course there's no doubt that in making a journey,
From Canada to France things do get knocked about,
But one thing you find in a true British soldier,
However hard hit he ne'er makes a shout.

We were surely disappointed, that goes without saying,
And couldn't think what in the world we could do,
Till Jones made a kind of inspired suggestion,
That he give it to the cook to make into a stew.

The cookie was in when I went over with it,
He was in a bad temper, so spoke rather rash,
Said he, "There's no cook in the whole British army,
Can beat the post office at making a hash."

During all this time we had not been long enough in one place to be able to construct a dugout for ourselves till just now, and we certainly felt all the more secure from the raider for its possession, but it gave rise to many funny remarks at the expense of the boys.

One night the enemy came over and we made a bee line for the friendly shades of the dugout, but just as the last man was descending the steps a bomb fell only a few yards away, and losing his hold of the sides the man rolled down the steps and landed all in a heap in the midst of his chums. During the lull between this and their next visit to us an hour later, I was able to write the following lines:

Our Dugout

The moon hath raised her light on high,
And many stars are in the sky,
The German planes are drawing nigh,
Our dugout.

The first alarm has just been heard,
And every man from bed has stirred,
We do see life, upon my word,
In a dugout.

My chums and I have been down here,
It seems to me for nigh a year,
And now the bombs are falling near,
Our dugout.

The first big bomb has just dropped down,
And spread destruction all around,
We're twenty feet below the ground,
In a dugout.

It's freezing keen as mustard here,
There isn't much to raise a cheer,
But we'll live through it, never fear,
In our dugout.

You folks at home are snug in bed,
The fellows here are seeing red,
And heaping wrath on Fritz's head,
From our dugout.

Of course the lads are not to blame,
It really does seem quite a shame;
Why are we here in heaven's name,
In a dugout?

This can't go on for very long,
One day will come the victor's song,
And then we'll gladly say "so long."
Unto our dugout.

Each succeeding day now became one of intense excitement, as the reports brought in daily by our air scouts and photographers showed us that division after division was being rushed over from the Russian front, to be hurled against us in some attack that was being planned.

In spite of this knowledge, however, as the days of February merged into March and no attack was made upon us, we began to think that perhaps the attack after all would come from our side.

CHAP. 13

THE PUSH

ON the morning of March 21st, 1918, such a bombardment broke upon us as I have never heard. As early as 5.30 in the morning the shells were falling in the camp, and they continued all day, through the night and into the next day, when we heard from our advanced parties around Velu that our infantry line had been broken through.

Our colonel received the following order from G.H.Q.: "Keep the line open, save the big guns, and all men and material possible, then blow up the track, bridges and roads in the face of the enemy."

Our colonel who had jurisdiction over the whole railway system from Arras to Peronne, now formed the corps into a demolition corps, instead of railway construction, and in the next few weeks we handled enough Aminol, gun cotton, and other explosives, to have blown the whole of France skyward. Every track was mined here and there, at short distances, as were the bridges and roads, and as the enemy continued his advance, our despatch riders were kept busy, rushing orders to one part or another, for the destruction of a section of the track or some bridge.

We got down all the big guns, that is the guns firing from the railway and requiring a locomotive to move them, without mishap; one of these, however, had a

narrow escape from falling into enemy hands. Owing to shell fire, the lines had spread in one place, and the gun trolley threatened to leave the track. With the aid of planking the gun and its tender were got over the difficult place, and rolled away to safety, but only as the enemy was within revolver shot.

On the third day of the battle, one of our corporals came in on the rail motor in an extreme state of exhaustion. One of our lieutenants, himself and a bunch of men had been with one of the guns, and had just succeeded in snatching it from the clutches of the enemy. He brought in the intelligence that the last bridge beyond Bapaume had been blown up.

Headquarters camp was now too hot to hold us, and we were instructed to pack up at once; this was not so easily done as said, as we had a vast quantity of railway tools and stores, contained in two bow huts, but with the shells coming in every minute, we started to pack our stores and equipment into six cars, three box cars, and three open trucks. Our three lorries were also loaded with camp equipment, such as we could save, and at 11 30 on the morning of the third day of the push, we pulled out of our siding into Achiet-le-Grand yard.

This yard was at the time receiving the close attention of the enemy, as it was the junction for Arras, Bapaume, and Albert.

We had only to smash up that point, and the whole system was out of commission. Fortunately the three hospitals had been evacuated the previous day; the shells fell thick and fast around there. As our cars stood in the siding I saw a fifteen-inch shell go right through the church army hut, and another into the ration yard. After awhile we got away on our first stage of the retirement, our destination being Beauzart. We had to double back from Achiet-le-Grand to Miramont or

Irles junction, and here we came in the range of fire again.

The explosive shells were bursting quite near the track, throwing the mud and stones against the sides and over the tops of the cars. Reaching Beauzart about six o'clock at night, we had to run the gauntlet of a couple of German planes, which gave us very unnecessary attention from our point of view; we drew into a cutting just outside the town, and an hour later we heard the crashing of bombs falling into the town, and much damage was done.

Our intention had been to stop here, but as the enemy advance had not been held up, we went on to Acheux, and there we held up for a day and a night, when we had orders to retire still farther, as the advance still continued. Passing through Collin Camps we continued along the line we had built until we reached the Authie valley line, down which we passed to the little town of Authie, where we pitched camp. It was very sad work, I assure you, going over that line again and in the wrong direction, to say nothing of the hardship of packing and unpacking our heavy cumbersome material; it was very saddening to feel that we were being driven nearer and nearer the coast, and that the Huns were drawing all the time nearer to Amiens—the key to Paris.

While headquarters were thus retiring step by step, the days were going very hard. With the boys of the line the fifth army under Gough had failed to stand, and the third and fourth armies had to retire, and also open out to keep the Huns from widening the breach by their method of infiltration, that is finding a place in the line weakly held and sending large bodies of men against it, using fresh troops who dash through the breach, and establish a bulge in the line.

Our various sections were out all along the line; from Arras to a point opposite Peronne, they had retired

with the artillery, and had blown up the line at Velu, Bapaume, and Albert yards, and station and the bridge at Albert. A despatch rider was now sent out with orders to destroy the yard and station at Achiet-le-Grand. This was done, and the water towers we had erected were sent flying in the air, and our men called in. We had now a long train of some sixty cars including living cars, as our companies had now joined headquarters.

Our No. 2 company had a hard time getting in, their cars being riddled like pepper castors by shrapnel. We had our camp all fixed at Authie, our cars on the line, and the large dining marquee and the cook houses just across the river, and we felt we should be able to rest here. About eight o'clock at night, however, we had orders to move out again, and we had only forty minutes given us to pack. As the engine came along to hitch on to us the shrapnel was breaking over the hills.

This time we pulled up at Authieul some hours later, absolutely played out, for we had now been setting up and pulling down again for five successive days. I confess to a feeling of deep dejection as we came to rest at the foot of the beautiful valley, and I wondered for a while if after all the sacrifice we were not going to lose out in the great struggle.

I had noticed on my way down that the river banks were strewn with primroses, daffodils, and cowslips, and somehow the promise of spring in a land of devastation and war had its effect upon my saddened spirit, and I began to look at the situation with a more optimistic eye. I called to mind the concrete defences we had broken down in 1917, just a year before.

I reminded myself of the sixty-foot dugouts in which the enemy had sheltered from our bombardments, and remembered that we had systematically destroyed these as we went along. I also called to mind that most of

the trenches had been filled in, and the enemy whom we had driven out of all his defenses, would now have to hold as best he could a tract of ground which contained no defense at all, and surely if we could drive him out a year ago with all the advantages on his side, I felt sure if we could only bring him up, we should have no difficulty in driving him out, when we could take up the advance again. I felt sure, somehow, he would not be able to drive us beyond the Serre ridge, and in this my surmise proved to be correct.

It will be remembered by those who read my letters which were published on March 28, 1918, that I advised the people of St. John not to be too much downcast by the bad news they were receiving at that time, as things were not so bad as they looked. Later events proved that the enemy's greatest success had been his biggest failure. When he started that offensive he had eighty-four divisions in our sector, and some twenty-four others in reserve. When the push ended, his reserves had melted away, and his fighting divisions were badly used up also. It would be idle to deny that we lost heavily ourselves, and it is of no use to go into the question of why the Fifth army failed to hold. Some have said that there were too many untried troops in that army, but it only needs to be pointed out that the Fifth army was replaced by a part of the 300,000 boys who were sent out to replace those who had been killed and captured, and that in the subsequent advance made, these very boys gloriously emulated their elders, in pushing back the Huns through to Mons. Particularly is this true of the 19th British division and the Welsh Brigade.

We had two awful nights at Authieul for the raiders were over all the time, their object being to get the junction and yard at Doullens which was heavily congested with traffic. Doullens is a junction of the lines

to Arras, through Gombrometz and Beaumetz, on the left to Achiet-le-Grand and Bapaume in the centre, and to Candus and Albert on the right.

The 26th of March was a lovely day and we had cheering news that the push was slowing up, but we had not yet succeeded in checking them altogether. This night they came over on a raid, and did much damage with the bombs, but we had the satisfaction of bringing down two of their planes.

Silent Night, Peaceful Night

The witching hour of midnight finds the camp in peaceful sleep,
The stars are shining brightly in the sky,
The knights of modern culture are out upon the prowl,
I hear the planes just now a-drawing nigh.

We scatter to our shelter, for bravery doesn't count,
When things like bombs are falling all around,
It's not a pleasant sight to see when Fritz has gone from here,
The human litter strewn all o'er the ground.

Some weeks ago he came along, and when he went back home,
He left men minus feet and hands and some will ne'er see home.
We gathered up some ten or so all blown to little bits,
Now can you wonder if at times we kind of hate old Fritz.

SONS OF ENGLAND

JOHN BULL AND His ALLIES, PRIZE-WINNING FLOAT. SOLDIERS' JOY DAY, August 14, 1919.

John Bull and our Allies was the name given to the float of the Sons of England lodges which took part in the soldiers' joy day parade, August 14, 1919, and which was awarded the first prize as the most original float. Preceding the float as it appeared on the march were five mounted men in Lancaster regalia and representing Great Britain, Belgium, France, United States and Japan. This party was led by Lieutenant Logan, who mounted, and was composed of the following returned men: S. M. Ryerson, Corporal Clemens, Pte. H. T. Cobb, Pte. J. T. Wood. The float itself, a party as follows: Edward Harding, "John Bull"; J. W. Cook, "Canada"; George Leaver, "Australia"; J. Mills, "India"; S. M. Truscott, "South Africa"; Lieut. Misses Willis Carless and Dennice Smith, "Red Cross Nurses"; Master Arthur S. Lewis, "Sailor Boy," at the South and C. B. Nixon, "Miss-o-Nia's Mess." Co. Ladford had "The British Bull-dog" ready on hand. The moment was in charge of Chairman S. H. Logan and Bro. Brooks as marshal. W. Brindle, author of the book, is seen in the picture depicting scenes at the rear in uniform with bugle cross-

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It isn't nice to see a plane come hurtling to the ground,
Or see the German pilot burn while you stand helpless round,
But I'm sure you cannot blame us, if when these things occur,
We're kind o' glad there's one more plane whose wheels have ceased to whir.

Those whirring wheels, oh, how they get upon our nerves these days
How easily could we dispense with their engaging ways,
If only they'd commercialise this wonderful invention,
We'd welcome then much more than now their very kind attention.

Perhaps when war lust leaves the earth, and men once more are brothers,
We shall not fear the German bombs which murder babes and mothers,
The peace which has been promised long, will sure by then have started,
And nations war will learn no more, so let's not get downhearted.

This glorious peace is sure to come, 'tis by the prophets stated,
That spears to pruning hooks must turn, the swords with ploughshares mated,
The lion with the lamb shall lie, the wolf with kid shall tether,
A little child shall lead them and all live in peace together.

It was thought to be safer to send all our big tools and equipment such as steam shovels and pile drivers to

the base, and so with the stores cars, headquarters and company office cars, and living cars, we started in two log strings for Doullens and through to the coast, bringing up on the 29th of March at Dans Carmmiers, near Etaples. I was sent down in charge of the H.Q. cars, and when we reached our destination we found several other engineer units, both Canadians and British, had sought shelter in the same place.

We lay in this yard for eight days, and were then recalled to Freshvillers two miles beyond Doullens.

CHAP. 14

THE HUNS' WORST

DANS Carmmiers, by the way, is a yard which was put in by our No. 2 company and is twelve tracks wide. The week after we left, what I consider the most dastardly act of the war was perpetrated just a few miles down the line at Etaples. I refer to the bombing of the hospitals the second week in April, 1918.

Just a few days previous, I was through the Canadian and American hospitals, and one or two of the British looking for friends from all three countries whom I knew were in the trouble zone at the time of the push.

I was struck with wonder at the marvellous way these hospitals had been fitted, everything as clean as could possibly be made, and the appliances for the wounded were amazing. Here was a case of an abdominal wound, with the bed raised at the foot so the head of the patient would be downward. Over other beds were ropes and pulleys suspended from the ceiling, for the support of bad leg wounds, and after the experiences of the last two weeks it will be readily understood that every hospital tent and hut was full, every bed occupied.

It was over such a scene as this that the German bombers hovered on that awful night and dropped their murderous missiles, and not satisfied with that, when all the bombs were used, these inhuman creatures came low and used their machine guns on the struggling mass of dead and wounded men and nurses.

The next morning revealed an awful sight, doctors, nurses and patients in an indescribable mass of ruined tents, huts and hospital equipment, with more than seven hundred casualties. The excuse given for this dastardly deed was that they were after the railway line, and if we were foolish enough to place our hospitals so near the railway, the fault was ours. Now let me say how futile was this excuse, for between the nearest set of rails and the nearest hut was at least three hundred yards, and again if it was necessary to break the line, would it not have been just as easy a mile to the right or left of the hospital, which was plainly marked in the usual way, by a big red cross upon a white ground.

On the 6th of April, 1918, we rejoined our corps with the stores and equipment at Freshvillers, just beyond Doullens in the Authey valley, and from here began the preparation of the work, which took us for the second time over the Somme and Ancre, but this time the road led through Cambrai and on to Mons.

We had four rather quiet, but very anxious, months here, with the exception of numerous visits from the air raiders, and occasional shelling by a long range gun. It must not be gathered from this that we were kept idle, not by any means. King George, Clemenceau, Haig, Foch and many other important personages had attended a council at Doullens to discuss the seriousness of the situation, and the result was the adoption of a plan which brought success to the Allied arms.

A line of precaution was now adopted which would have been much more valuable had it been taken sooner. When the enemy started his push in March, we had not a second line on which our infantry could retire, as the trenches of 1917 had been so filled in by the action of the weather and the passing over them of men and material, as to be unfit for further use. We now began feverishly

to dig a fresh line of trenches, in fear of a further attempt by the enemy when he had sufficiently rested his forces. Every available battalion was set digging. I have seen such troops as the Guard Division digging away at a trench system which stretched from Arras to below Aveluy wood.

Our special duty was to take charge of enormous stocks of explosives and to mine roads, bridges and tracks in all the Somme area, which was now open to us in readiness for any advance which the enemy might determine to make. The long railway trestle bridge at Doullens over which trains from the base to Arras, Bapaume, and Albert, had perforce to travel, had something over 120 charges put in place for an immediate explosion should the enemy suddenly appear.

All the motor and troop roads leading to the same sections of the front were mined, and obstructions of various kinds placed on the roadside, ready to be drawn across the road in case of need, whilst machine guns were placed at frequent intervals, to mow down any armoured motor cars which might appear as an advance force.

May was a moonlight month and we rarely got a night's sleep, for as sure as nine o'clock came around the distant drone of the Gnome engine could be heard, to be followed very soon after, by the crashing of the first bomb, and from that time on, to three or four o'clock in the morning, they would all the time be going and coming. I shall never forget the first week in May, 1918, the night of the 6th I think it was, when the planes came over a little earlier that night and for nearly an hour cruised around without dropping anything. I felt sure they were trying to locate some particular object, and so it proved, for presently an arc light was dropped from the foremost plane, and it lit up the whole valley,

and in the clear light one plane dropped a bomb in the field next the Canadian hospital, and the next one dropped right through the roof, and crashing through to the basement which was the operating theatre, set fire to the ether stored there, and in a few minutes the whole place was in a blaze. A second bomb also went through the building and two others fell, one on each side.

At the moment when the first bomb fell there were sleeping on the top floor eight sergeants who had been on duty all day; on the middle floor were some wounded men in their cots, while on the bottom floor in the operating theatre were the operating crew, consisting of two doctors, four nurses and some few orderlies, and two cases were on the table. The whole outfit were killed outright and burned up in the debris, and there was an awful sight next morning when thirty-two charred bodies were taken out and buried next day in the little cemetery just outside the town.

The building was in the shape of a letter L, one long side and one shorter side. The bombs fell through the shorter side, and tore it away from the joining of the long end, leaving a gaping hole in the end of each floor where the sides had joined. The hospital was quite full at the time, and though the nurses knew that their companions in the other wards had been killed, to their everlasting honor be it said, not one of these Canadian girls left her post.

Heroes and Heroines

Another day has reached its close,
The sun in the west sinks down,
The day nurse drinks her cup of tea,
E're she makes her closing round.

How are you, No. 1? asks she,
As she gave a cheery smile,
To the Tommy whose leg was plaster cast,
As she stood by his cot a while.

And No. 2, what's wrong with you?
Not comfortable quite?
She deftly shook his pillows up,
And, smiling, said good night.

And one by one the twenty cots,
Of twenty wounded men,
A visit had from Sister Grace,
She said good night again.

Then Sister May took up the task,
Which Sister Grace laid down,
And made the round of twenty cots,
Before the night closed round.

Now No. 9 a fracture had,
And No. 10 a splintered break,
And No. 12 a piece of shell
Left poison in its wake.

And No. 4 an eye had lost,
And No. 3 a piece of shrap,
Took off his leg above the knee,
He couldn't get a nap.

The shades of night now closed around,
Those twenty wounded men,
And many more in other wards,
Were wrestling with their pain.

The silent hour of midnight came,
And found them most asleep,
The watchful sisters, round the ward,
Like timid mice did creep.

They felt secure, beneath the cross,
So plainly printed on
The roof of every single hut,
In red, white ground upon.

A sound was heard which chilled the blood
Of every person there.
The sound was made by falling bombs,
A-crashing through the air.

"Keep quiet, boys," the nurses said,
"And don't excited get,
We'll have you in the dugout,
They won't be here just yet."

Alas! a bomb crashed through the roof,
Those timid sisters then,
Stood by the sick, and fully proved,
God gave them hearts of men.

And morning light an awful sight
Reveals to mortal eye,
The nurses, doctors, patients all,
In blazing ruin lie.

What awful reckoning must be faced,
Now this great war is won,
By men who do such deeds as these,
Oh, cruel kultured Hun!

CHAP. 15

MARKING TIME

THE week after the dastardly affair mentioned in the last chapter for which no excuse of any kind could be offered (as the hospital was as far removed from the railway as is Fort Howe from the Union Depot), we had three battalions of the U. S. infantry march into Doullens, and they brought into the war an entirely new spirit, which was very helpful to our tired and weary troops, after the experiences which they had just passed.

The 101st, 2nd and 3rd were followed a few weeks later by the 105th, 6th and 7th, and they did some of the craziest things imaginable. Fancy a staid and stately British military band and in war time, marching through the streets of any city with blacked faces and dressed like a bunch of silly kids on Hallo'een night, yet these American bands went through this performance night after night, and finished up on the square with a minstrel concert to the immense amusement of the inhabitants, who if they could not understand the words spoken or sung, could appreciate the comic attitudes struck by the players.

We saw two complete divisions of British infantry march out of here to the help of the Italians, as they struggled to drive the enemy back across the Piave, and we greatly wondered if we could possibly spare them, but we had later to see still another division go to the

help of the French in the Champagne, where the enemy was making another drive which proved as barren of results as did their drives against us and the Italians.

Through the months of June and July the three lines running from Doullens to Arras, Bapaume and Albert were kept in perfect repair, though several times broken by enemy shells, and material for the proposed advance was gathered together ready for the time when it should be needed

In the meantime the first of July found the Canadians just as ready to celebrate as if there had been no war on at all.

CHAP. 16

CANADIANS AT PLAY AND WORK

IT had been planned to hold big sports on Dominion Day, 1918, and for this purpose a big piece of ground had been selected, covering several acres situated between St. Pol and Arras, at a place named Tinques, called Tanks by our boys, as being near enough anyway.

On the morning of the First, every road certainly led to "Tanks." The 1st, 3rd and 4th divisions were out of the line preparing for something I shall speak of later on. The 2nd division came out that very morning, and for hours before the appointed time for the beginning of events, motor lorries, box cars, horse rigs, motor bikes and push bikes filled the roads approaching the ground, which had been splendidly fitted up for the occasion.

Two massive Canadian arches stood, one at each entrance, tremendous grandstands were dotted here and there around the big course where events took place, to accommodate thousands. Big marquees were everywhere for the sale of drinks, candies and food, while the Y. M. C. A. had a big tent where free drinks were supplied right through the day.

Bandstands were also erected at several points, and music was seldom missing as band after band took up or changed positions throughout the day.

A sight to be long remembered was that of the march past of the massed band of pipers, the skirl of the pipes,

the multi-colored tartan, the lilt of the sporan and the swing of the kilt, and the row upon row of splendid manhood made as inspiring a picture as one could wish to see.

Base ball and foot ball games, with running and jumping, boxing, etc., made up a fine day's entertainment for the more than 20,000 Canadians who gathered there, under the very guns of the enemy, and in a spot where two or three bombing planes could have done awful destruction.

Nothing so untoward, however, happened to mar the day's sport, and many of the boys who excelled on that field won greater glory on another field some few weeks later.

The first weeks of August found much movement of troops in the region of the Somme. The Canadians were brought down from around Arras, and placed on the Amiens front, the 51st Scottish division was brought into the line farther to the right and the 37th with some Americans filled in the line between, with the Welsh Brigade and the Guards division.

On the 8th of August the long looked for day arrived and just as I felt sure it would be, the Huns could not stand before our attack. The Canadians broke the German line at Amiens, thus beginning the movement which rolled them up like a scroll.

We had some of the crack British cavalry billeted in the same village where we were, and on my talking with a few men of the Scotch Greys, 17th Lancers, and Household cavalry, they spoke in glowing terms of the way the Canadians stormed the line at Amiens; they said they never saw anything to equal it by any infantry they had ever seen.

It was a case of hammer and tongs with our corps now, the infantry moved along so quickly we had all our work cut out to keep pace with them. On the 15th of

August our headquarters moved up to Biefvillers, a point beyond where we were in March when we were pushed back. In less than two weeks we were at Havrincourt, our heavies being in the wood. I shall for a long time remember how our cars rocked like a ship at sea, with the firing of the guns in the bombardment before our boys took Cambrai.

Three days after Cambrai was taken we moved up to Marcoing, and a few days later through Bourlon to Marquion. From the last named place we went to Sauchy Cauchy, and the same week moved up to Aniche. September found us in Somain, where we remained for three weeks. In their retirement the Huns as usual had done all the mischief possible. Cambrai was the first big town we struck on the new advance which I had not previously seen, several smaller places we passed were badly destroyed. One piece of work we did at the Nord Canal just outside Havrincourt should be mentioned. The canal had been drained around here by the Germans, revealing a well-laid brick bottom and sides. The road above this, going around by the slag heap, was in sight of the enemy, so we cut a road into the canal at a certain point and ran along the canal bottom with motor and horse transport, etc., and came out again on a ramp about a mile further along.

The railway had been badly broken up by the retreating enemy, and there were several bridges to be replaced. The Canadian cavalry operating with the cavalry brigade, got into a tight corner on the outskirts of Rumilly, and we saw several horses and raiders in the canal as we went by.

Cambrai was badly smashed in places, but by far the greater destruction was to furniture, houseful after houseful of beautiful and most exquisitively carved furniture was mutilated in every conceivable way.

Many pianos of great value were destroyed, and some few had been left intact, with small bombs or other explosives attached to lid or key, and those foolish enough to raise the lid or strike the keys paid the penalty in missing hands, or disfigured faces. Sauchy Cauchy was in an awful condition; houses and furniture in indescribable heaps, but the thing that struck me most was the task our boys must have had to take it. The town stood on a high eminence, and it was surrounded on three sides with the greatest depth of barbed wire I have ever seen. At the foot of the hill, a mile and a half from the town, ran the canal about two hundred yards across, and its bank held by numerous machine guns. The bridges were all blown and several attempts were made by our boys before they got across, but courage and patience succeeded, and at last the other bank was won, and our splendid fellows found their way through the wire and gained the town, but not before the despoilers had wrecked everything.

I went into one big chateau, and the beautiful upholstered furniture was smashed and cut, the splendid concert grand piano had the front knocked in and overturned, and the bathroom tap had been turned on, and flooded the splendid apartments. Ecourt St. Quentin on the other side of the canal was in the same condition, as also was Paluel, a little farther on. Anisch, our next stop, was the first place we struck where the inhabitants had been allowed to remain behind.

We were only here a few days, and when we reached Somain, our next stop, the people all turned out to meet us, and made us right welcome. We found the children very shy of us at first, but we were not surprised when we were informed that the Germans had told them that we were a race of savages who would eat them up. They soon found out the difference, however, for as our boys

were billeted in the homes, there were lots of pennies and candies for the children.

Beauvrages, near Valenciennes, was our next stop, and here again we were received with open arms. There was a Welsh lady here, who had married a French professor of languages in England. She had been visiting her husband's parents when the war broke out, and she had been compelled to stay there all the time of the occupation.

This lady told us how the Huns had swaggered into their houses, and ordered them to give up their beds and rooms, and sleep anywhere they could, while the soldiers occupied the sleeping accommodations, and that they had been compelled to wait on them hand and foot. We were also told how the Huns seized all the best food, while the German substitutes were handed out to the people. I was shown a photo of the lady as she was before the war, and her condition when we saw her bore eloquent testimony to the way she must have suffered.

I spoke on several occasions with the grandson of the mayor, a boy eleven years old, and he told me how he had been made to work in the field from early morn until late at night, with very little food, and his appearance certainly bore out his story. During the three weeks we were there, we certainly saw that he lacked for nothing.

It was my duty to go into Valenciennes every morning for rations, and Anzin through which we passed was badly broken up, the bridges over the Nord canal were all blown, as was the large railway station just on the opposite bank.

Our boys had had a time getting across the canal here, as they had been held up by machine guns. Some of them had evidently tried to swim across and been shot in the water. We took out five poor fellows and buried them.

It was now November, and our boys were pushing ahead for Mons. There was talk of an armistice being

signed; but meanwhile the Canadians pressed on. Shall I ever forget the 12th of November, 1918. I guess not, for the armistice was signed on the previous day, and at ten o'clock hostilities ceased. Mons was given up, and refugees and our prisoners as well as the French were liberated and began the march toward our armies and Valenciennes. On the early morning of the 12th there entered the latter place thousands of weary, emaciated, footsore soldiers and civilians, who had tramped all through the night, and the previous day, and a truly pitiable plight some of them were in.

For the next three weeks the sad procession continued, aged people, young mothers with their babies; here a mother with a baby in her arms and a couple of little tots dragging at her skirts, all her worldly possessions done up in a large sized handkerchief.

The square of Valenciennes for weeks was piled up with the luggage of the refugees. The weather in November was bitter cold, and heavy frosts at night made it doubly hard for all on the road. The women and children had been stripped of every woolen garment in their possession before they left the hands of their captors. The soldier prisoners, both French and British, were dressed any old way, a German cap, British jacket and French pants with two boots made up a full suit. It mattered not if the boots were pairs or not; quite often I have seen men with a German long boot on one foot, and a British ankle boot on the other. We of the transport had orders to give every possible assistance to the refugees on the roads, and we needed no reminder of that order, for times out of number we had the old lorry packed as tight as she would hold.

On the last stretch of the road, we had seven bridges to build or repair, and these were completed and the line open to Mons in three weeks' time, and as a reward

IMPERIAL
GOD BLESS THE
PRINCE OF

ST. JOHN'S CHIEF "CIVIC CENTER" DECORATED TO GREET THE PRINCE.

The Imperial Theatre, shown in the picture opposite, was the rallying point of many patriotic demonstrations during the war. This theatre was used largely for recruiting meetings and in the interest of many causes. Through the courtesy and kindness of Mr. Walter H. Golding, manager of the theatre, this building was always available for such gatherings and it was most fitting that His Royal Highness should pause in front of the Imperial Theatre to receive the greeting of the orphan children stationed at this point. Mr. Golding was also personally responsible for much of the success of the dual celebration in St. John in August, 1919, having charge of the publicity and assisting generally with all preparations made.

we were given two days' leave in Brussels, and it is certainly "some" city. Mons was a very busy place, and seemed to be the centre for shopping purposes of a vast number of smaller places. I expected Mons to show some of the signs of war which so plainly marked the hundreds of other places I had seen, but from appearances, there might not have been a war within a thousand miles of the town.

Brussels was the city par excellence, however. We got there two days after King Albert and Queen Elizabeth had ridden in at the head of their troops. The whole city was one mass of floral arches, and flower decked statues and monuments, but the one which easily took precedence was the noble monument the Belgian people have raised to that truly noble woman, Nurse Cavell. There it stood in the Grand Plaza on the spot where she was foully murdered.

December was now upon us, and I was eagerly looking for my annual pass, which was due the first week in January, and I was figuring on a visit to Paris, but I received a cable from home which put this out of my mind entirely. The cable briefly stated that my eldest girl, aged twenty-three, and my second boy, aged twenty-five, who had been discharged from the army unfit for foreign service, had died within a day of each other of influenza, and a letter following stated that the three remaining girls and mother were also held in the grip of this dreadful disease.

I had but one thought now, to get back home with all speed, and as I had been away from home three years and a half and was over age, I felt quite justified in asking for leave to Canada in place of my usual pass to England, so I put in an application which was granted. My two boys were in England expecting to be sent home, the youngest one had been there since his wound at

Vimy in April, 1917. The older one was recovering from his second wound received in the push of August.

I left my unit on December 22, and reached England after a very weary journey of five days, on the night of Christmas. We landed at Southampton, and proceeded to Witley, just seven miles from the Longmoor camp where we did our training in England.

There were thousands of Canadians here all on the way home, and eagerly expecting removal to Rhyl, the last calling place before the boat at Liverpool. I was held there a month and it surely was the longest month of them all. However the move came at last and after a long train journey Rhyl was reached, but here were thousands of others waiting transportation, some whose sailing had been several times cancelled. I was kept waiting here for three weeks and eventually sailed for home on February 14, 1919, and landed at Halifax on the 24th.

It was surely good to be home again after such an absence, and very pleasant to find I had not been forgotten by my many friends in St. John during my absence, as was evidenced by the many telephone calls all through the day following my arrival.

Well, Dear Readers, I have had a great experience and I have the satisfaction of knowing that as far as it was in me, I did my bit for the dear old Empire in the hour of her need.

I, along with all who went overseas too, am now home again. Let us not forget that we fought, bled, and suffered for a land that was worthy of it all, let us not forget to be worthy of the land we call home, our dear Dominion; let us strive now we are here, to fight as hard for our civil, provincial, and national honor, as we did for our national safety. We have beaten to her knees the enemy who sought to subjugate us to her rule but

failed. There are other enemies still for us to face, the enemies within our Dominion, the paid agitator who would seek to disrupt the Empire, and upset all recognized authority. Of him beware, he may come in the guise of a friend, but he is an enemy all the same. With our thoughts fixed on the comrades, who having made the supreme sacrifice, now sleep behind on Flanders fields, let us set our faces steadfastly toward the goal of a sober, clean and pure life, as we did set our faces toward Vimy, Passchendaele and Cambrai, determined to win out in the higher struggle as we did in the more material one.

Well, peace is now signed, the war is over, let us pray that no such thing will e'er darken the pages of history again. Indeed it would seem almost impossible that this could ever be, seeing that the whole civilized world has been concerned in it, and surely those who were found on the right side shall have their reward.

Their Reward is Sure

Oh, broken Belgium, bleeding, torn,
Oh, France, well nigh bled white,
Oh, Britain, who has lost her sons,
And still maintains the fight,
Oh, Serbia slain, yet raised again
Your armies fighting stand,
Roumania, your task is hard
With foes on every hand.
And Italy, brave Italy,
Though almost tricked to shame,
Thou'rt standing still and still shall stand,
Defending freedom's name.
And Greece, who once was known to fame,
For all the world to see,

Still lends her influence and help
For those who would be free.
While Russia who in ancient days,
Stood out above the rest
Lies scattered like a flock of sheep,
Of shepherd dispossessed.
America whose hearts were clean,
From any lust of war,
Now feels compelled to send her sons,
To fight in lands afar.
The little men from far Japan,
And men from China, too,
And many independent states,
Are pledged to see it through.
Oh, what shall be your prize reward,
When all the fighting's done,
The thought that on the battlefields,
Where this great war was won,
Lies the resting place of all your sons,
Their dust together mingling,
Shall knit the nations into one,
And one great purpose kindling,
The east and west in common cause,
Shall face the task together,
And drive all war lords from their midst,
Then peace shall reign forever.
This your reward to live in those,
Whom you may leave behind,
Bequeathing to posterity
One aim, one heart, one mind.
Thus gathered from the ends of earth,
Where they long years have wandered,
The sons of men shall home return,
And never more be squandered.

THE END

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